



Doing Business in Mauritius:

2011 Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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Chapter 1: Doing Business In Mauritius

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Market Overview

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Mauritius, a small island of 1.2 million people 500 miles east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, is one of the most economically successful and politically stable countries in Africa, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$9.5 billion and per capita income of over \$7,400 in 2010. Mauritius' small size (720 sq. miles) understates its importance to the Indian Ocean region as it controls an extensive Exclusive Economic Zone of 1.9 million sq km.

The World Bank's 2011 Doing Business report ranks Mauritius first in Africa for the third consecutive year (20th worldwide, out of 183 economies) in terms of overall ease of doing business. The government's objective is for Mauritius to rank among the top ten most investment and business friendly locations in the world.

The Mauritian economy is based mainly on tourism, textiles, sugar, and financial services. In recent years, information and communications technology (ICT), seafood, hospitality, property development, healthcare, and education and training have emerged as important sectors, attracting substantial investment from both local and foreign investors.

Mauritius's economy suffered at the turn of the millennium as longstanding trade preferences in textiles and sugar -- the foundation of its growth strategy -- were phased out. In 2005, the government embarked on a bold economic reform program aimed at opening the economy, facilitating business, improving the investment climate, and mobilizing foreign direct investment and expertise. These reforms had considerable success in accelerating the rate of growth, reducing unemployment, and speeding up the pace of diversification of the economy through the development of new sectors. These helped absorb the shocks of the global economic recession and the Euro-zone crisis and set the stage for Mauritius to resume accelerated growth in 2010 and in following years. GDP growth is forecasted at 4.2 percent in 2011, compared to 4.1 percent in 2010.

Mauritius is a well-established democracy with a liberal economy. The business climate is friendly but very competitive. Mauritius has a long tradition of private entrepreneurship, which has led to a strong and dynamic private sector. Firms entering the market will find a well-developed legal and commercial infrastructure. It also has a modern financial services sector and a stock exchange, which is a member of the World Federation of Exchanges.

The government policy is to act as a facilitator to business, leaving production to the private sector. However, it still controls key utility services, including electricity, water, waste water, postal services, and television broadcasting. The State Trading Corporation controls imports of rice (non-basmati), wheat flour, petroleum products, and cement, and the Agricultural Marketing Board controls imports of potatoes, onions, corn, and some spices that compete with locally grown produce. An administered price regime remains in place for a few basic goods (e.g. wheat flour, bread, cooking gas,

canned fish, pharmaceuticals, sugar, etc), sensitive to the low-income section of the population.

As signatory of a number of regional trading blocks, Mauritian exports are eligible for preferential access to markets of the South African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Europe (under the EU-East Africa Economic Partnership Agreement), and the United States (under the African Growth and Opportunity Act- AGOA). In September 2006, Mauritius and the United States signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), aimed at strengthening and expanding trade and investment ties between the two countries. Mauritius is also currently negotiating a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with the United States. The BIT will help improve Mauritius's already favorable investment climate by providing high standards of investment protection.

The United States was the 13th largest source of Mauritian imports in 2009, well behind India (18.7%), China (12.6%), France (11.7%), South Africa (8.7%), Japan (3.2%), Malaysia (2.9%), Australia (2.8%), and Thailand (2.6%). According to the Mauritius Central Statistical Office, U.S. exports to Mauritius for the first nine months of 2010 are estimated at \$84 million, which is more than the \$79 million registered for the entire 12 months of 2009. Main imports from the United States in 2010 include plastic articles, agricultural/construction/industrial machinery and equipment, medical and surgical instruments, precious stones and jewelry, aircraft parts, automatic data processing machines, casino slot machines, outboard motors, books and encyclopedias, and industrial chemicals. In 2010, with an 11% share, the United States was Mauritius's third largest market after U.K. (22%) and France (17%). Principal Mauritian exports to the United States include apparel, non-industrial diamonds/jewelry, live animals, sunglasses, fish products, sugar, processed specialty food, medical and surgical instruments, and leather products.

Mauritius is a parliamentary democracy based on the British Westminster system. This system has engendered democratic values and provided for considerable political stability throughout Mauritius, which has contributed to its steady economic growth during the past decades. Free and fair elections are held every five years. The last election was held in May 2010 and the ruling coalition was re-elected to power for another 5-year period.

Market Challenges

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At this time, there are no specific barriers for U.S. firms entering the Mauritian market. The small size of the Mauritian market (1.2 million people) and the vast distance (10,000 miles) between Mauritius and the United States negatively influences freight costs and therefore the competitiveness of U.S. products vs. their European and Asian counterparts.

U.S. firms entering the Mauritian market must contend with a well-established, mainly European competition. Consumers are generally price sensitive, although people in the middle to high-income groups are willing to pay a higher price for quality.

Monopoly, and more generally, collusion between suppliers are prevalent in the domestic economy, especially where there are few suppliers. However, in 2007 the Mauritian Parliament adopted a Competition Bill to promote fair competition, prevent monopolistic pricing, and restrict collusion in consumer markets. The Competition Act entered into force on November 25, 2009 and the Competition Commission is now

operational. The Competition Commission has already launched seven investigations, two of which are complete and five still ongoing. Although the physical infrastructure in Mauritius is superior to that of most Sub-Saharan African countries, increasing infrastructure bottlenecks have started to pose a major challenge to economic growth. Consequently, the government recently provided massive investment (\$1.4 billion) in public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, bus rapid transit system, and new airport and seaport terminals.

Market Opportunities

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In general, the best prospects for exports are in capital goods and services. The following projects represent the best prospects for U.S. exports and/or investment in Mauritius.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE: The government plans to invest an additional \$4.6 billion on the following projects over the next decade to improve infrastructure, particularly to ease traffic congestion:

- Roads
- Bridges
- Airport terminal
- Port equipment
- Tug boats
- Hydro dam
- Waste water sewage works

STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR CARGO HANDLING: The Cargo Handling Corporation, with the assistance of the World Bank, is looking for a strategic partner to provide expertise and increase efficiency in the port.

BUS TRANSIT SYSTEM: The government plans to implement a bus way and a bus rapid transit system as one of the solutions to ease traffic congestion. This would involve the purchase of new and fuel-efficient buses, a fleet management and fare collection system, and traffic related technologies such as traffic light systems and electronic toll systems. It also envisages reconsidering the feasibility of a light rail system to alleviate traffic congestion problem.

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT: The government is in the process of selecting a master developer for the construction of a new world-class city in the Highlands area, located in the center of the island, which will require an investment of USD \$3.7 billion. In addition, the private sector is developing a number of integrated resort projects that include luxury villas, commercial centers, golf courses, and spa and wellness centers. These projects represent opportunities for not only related equipment and materials but also services such as building and engineering designs as well as interior decoration.

TOURISM: Mauritius has 105 hotels and receives close to one million tourists (mainly European) annually. Business opportunities abound for suppliers of hotel, restaurant, sea sports equipment and supplies as well as hotel management services. Flagship brands such as Starwood, Hilton, Four Seasons, Intercontinental, St Regis, Oberoi, Taj, Sun Resorts, and Accor are already in Mauritius.

POWER TRANSMISSION GRID MONITORING SOFTWARE: A U.S. firm has been appointed to perform a feasibility study financed by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency on the proposed Transmission Grid and Transformer Network Monitoring

System Project of the local power utility, the Central Electricity Board. The project represents opportunities for suppliers of smart grid software.

HEALTHCARE: The GOM plans to digitize its health records for the entire population. This represents interesting business opportunities for healthcare IT solution providers.

MAURITIUS LAND-BASED OCEANIC PARK (MLOP) PROJECT: A U.S. firm has been appointed as the lead developer for the MLOP project that involves the pumping of cold seawater 1,000 meters deep for air conditioning of data centers and other applications. The project will require equipment and materials (cables, servers, UPS, etc) for the data centers as well as services for the laying of undersea pipes and the construction of the pumping station.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)/BUSINESS

PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPO): The ICT/BPO sector is the fastest growing sector in Mauritius, with an average of more than 14 percent in the last few years. Some 300 companies are currently active in this sector, employing about 15,000 people. In addition, the fact that Mauritians are bilingual in English and French provides an opportunity to tap the BPO francophone markets.

Additional prospects for U.S. exports and/or investment in the following sectors:

- Medical Equipment and devices
- Drugs/Pharmaceuticals
- Data processing equipment
- Security/Safety Equipment
- Air Conditioning/Refrigeration Equipment
- Telecommunications and Broadcasting Equipment and Services
- Wheat
- Crude Vegetable Oil
- Corn and soya beans for animal feed
- Seeds (potato, onions, other vegetable seeds, flower seeds)

Market Entry Strategy

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To enter the Mauritian market the use of a locally established agent or distributor is strongly recommended. Local agents have the contacts and the local knowledge of customs and preferences to introduce a product or service and to develop a customer base. Mauritians are bilingual in English and French. Creole, a modified form of French, is the mother tongue of most Mauritians.

Distribution of goods is uncomplicated given Mauritius's size: 42 miles north to south, and 28 miles east to west. Goods are distributed through the standard channels of importers, wholesalers, retailers, and supermarkets. For products requiring regular servicing, qualified personnel and a reasonable supply of parts are essential for success.

Also, we recommend that U.S. firms join a local partner while bidding for large government projects in Mauritius. In evaluating bids, the authorities would give points to bidders that have a local partner they could contact, especially in projects requiring after sale support services.

The Embassy's Commercial Section offers a variety of services designed to assist U.S. firms in developing their market entry strategy and to facilitate their export experience in Mauritius. For detailed information on these services, we recommend you visit the Embassy website at <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov> and click on the Commercial

Department. The Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis also partners with the U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg, South Africa, to expand the commercial resources we have available to interested parties. For a more comprehensive list of commercial services available to U.S. businesses, we recommend you visit their website at <http://www.buyusa.gov/southafrica/en> and click on “Services to U.S. Businesses.”

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Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2833.htm>

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Using an Agent or Distributor

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The use of an established agent or distributor is strongly recommended.

More than 200 U.S. companies/products are represented by local agents and distributors. For products requiring servicing, qualified personnel and a reasonable supply of parts are essential. The Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis partners with the U.S. Commercial Service Southern Africa, located in Johannesburg, South Africa, to expand the commercial services and resources we are able to provide to interested parties. For additional information, please visit our Embassy website at <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov> or the U.S. Commercial Service Southern Africa site at <http://www.buyusa.gov/southafrica/en/servicestouscompanies.html>

Establishing an Office

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The World Bank's 2011 Ease of Doing Business report ranks Mauritius first in Africa for the third year in a row in terms of overall ease of doing business. The Business Facilitation Act of 2006 simplified the business licensing process with respect to starting a business and allowed businesses to start operations within three days of incorporation.

Before starting operations, businesses must register with the Registrar of Companies. Regulations governing incorporation are contained in the Companies Act of 2001, which provides for the setting up of various types of companies. A list of the types of companies, as well as details regarding their incorporation in Mauritius, can be obtained from the Registrar of Companies website at <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/compdivsite>. The most common type used by foreigners is the private limited company. After receipt of a certificate of incorporation from the Registrar of Companies, all companies must register their business activities with the Board of Investment (BOI), the government's business facilitation and investment promotion agency, to be able to apply for an occupation permit and other facilities offered to investors.

Any person, either alone or together with another person, may apply for the incorporation of a company. A company is not required to have a memorandum and articles of association. However, a proposed company may choose to have a constitution, which under the Companies Act 2001 has replaced the memorandum and articles of association. The constitution need not be embodied in a notarial deed.

The Companies and Businesses Registration Integrated System provides for the electronic submission of applications for the incorporation of companies and of the National Business Registration Number. The on-line application form for the incorporation of a company is available at

<http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/compdiv/file/incorp.pdf>.

Franchising

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Franchising in Mauritius is principally present in the fast food sector. With per capita income of over \$7,400 and two income families leading increasingly hectic lives, the market for family restaurants and similar conveniences is growing. Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and McDonalds have been operating in Mauritius for a number of years. A few South African franchises such as Nando's, Steers, and Debonair pizza are also present in Mauritius.

Direct Marketing

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Direct marketing is limited to big-ticket items requested through government tenders. A few cosmetic, health, as well as house cleaning products are sold directly to consumers through visits to households or offices. Shopping by mail order and internet is relatively small due to the small size of the island and the high cost of shipping goods internationally.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

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Joint ventures are used mostly for construction and engineering projects. Foreign architects are required to enter into a joint venture with a Mauritian architect or firm to work on local projects. Licensing agreements, including royalties, are typically negotiated between the local firm and the foreign partner. Local companies are currently manufacturing a number of products, ranging from beverages to toiletries, under licenses.

Selling to the Government

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Major government contracts are handled through an autonomous Central Procurement Board. Government procurement regulations are available at <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/pposite/file/pporeg.pdf>. The Procurement Policy Office is responsible for formulating policies and issuing directives for the operation of a transparent and efficient public procurement system.

Tender notices are published in the Government Gazette and local media. They can also be accessed from the following Government of Mauritius web site:

<http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/eprocurement/index.jsp>. Tenders, open to foreign participation, are transmitted by the Embassy to the U.S. Department of Commerce, which in turn are disseminated to the U.S. Export Assistance Centers and other relevant agencies. Successful foreign bidders generally work with local partners in pursuing major contracts.

Distribution and Sales Channels

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Distribution of goods is relatively uncomplicated once goods arrive on the island given Mauritius's size: 42 miles north to south, and 28 miles east to west. Port Louis has a population of 155,000 and is the island's commercial center. There are four other major towns. Goods distributed through the standard channels of importers, wholesalers, retailers, and supermarkets.

Selling Factors/Techniques

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Effective advertising, competitive pricing, prompt delivery and reliable after sales servicing are critical. Companies wishing to introduce new products into the Mauritian market require market research and advertising to identify potential customers' buying patterns and preferences.

In general, food products, especially prepared/processed food, must be adapted to local tastes and conditions. For meat, provision must be made for halal (slaughtered according to Muslim rites) to cater to the Muslim community. Many Hindu Mauritians do not eat beef. About 52 percent of the population is Hindu and 16 percent Muslim.

Electronic Commerce

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E-Commerce on the island is quite limited. Mauritians still use websites more for information gathering than purchasing. Although the tariffs for ADSL and wireless internet connections have gone down significantly over the past years, internet services are still not accessible to all. Payment by credit cards, though, is very popular and is rapidly replacing cash payment, particularly in malls and supermarkets. Internet banking is relatively new but is being increasingly used.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

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The advertising industry in Mauritius is quite sophisticated. To successfully launch a product or service in Mauritius advertising is essential. U.S. exporters should be prepared to provide promotional support to their agents/distributors, particularly when introducing a product. Advertising can be in English, French, or Creole (the local dialect) but French and Creole are more popular.

Major media outlets include television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and billboards. The deregulation of the airwaves has introduced more competition via three independent radio stations. Television broadcasting though has not been liberalized yet and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation is the national television. Television advertising is the most effective. Consumer goods account for most advertising, followed by durables and services (banking, insurance, information technology, education).

There are about 200 advertising agencies in Mauritius. The Association of Advertising Agencies of Mauritius groups the 15 largest agencies that account 70 percent of the market. They provide a full range of services from concept to the final product, including media planning, market surveys, and creation of advertising materials. Advertising agencies normally derive 20 percent commission from any media booking. Multinational companies tend to work on a service fee basis rather than commission. Agencies may be contacted at:

Association of Advertising Agencies of Mauritius
c/o Logos Publicity Ltd
Rouget Ave.
Pailles, Mauritius
Tel: (230) 286-7330; Fax: (230) 286-7334
Email: aaamauritius@intnet.mu

There are three large daily newspapers and many weeklies. Most are in French but they do carry some articles and advertisements in English. Major newspapers and business magazines include:

L'Express (daily)	www.lexpress.mu
Le Mauricien (daily)	www.lemauricien.com
Le Matinal (daily)	www.lematinal.com
Le Defi Quotidien	www.ledefimedia.info
Week- end (weekly)	www.week-end.mu
Business Magazine (weekly)	Email: busmag@orange.mu

Pricing

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The Mauritian market is generally price sensitive, although middle and high-income brackets increasingly look for quality.

Prices are generally market-determined. However, the government controls prices and/or markups on a limited number of goods as a form of social protection to the vulnerable groups. The product categories currently subject to the maximum price regime are:

- Petroleum products
- Cement
- Cooking gas
- Wheat flour
- Rice (other than basmati) and bread

Maximum markups ranging from 17 - 45 percent apply to pharmaceuticals, timber, tires, infant milk, canned fish, corned beef, and fresh fruits.

Mauritius applies a 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) on all goods and services, except for some basic staple food items, medical and dental services, most pharmaceuticals, and educational and training services.

Sales Service/Customer Support

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After-sales servicing and availability of spares are essential for successfully marketing certain goods, particularly machinery and equipment. Most importers/distributors of domestic appliances and electronic goods have a workshop for servicing and sale of spares. U.S. manufacturers should be prepared to train local staff to provide efficient servicing. Thanks to awareness campaigns carried out by consumer protection organizations as well as the Ministry of Consumer Protection, Mauritian consumers are becoming more and more concerned about quality and after sales service.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property

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The institutional framework for intellectual property rights (IPR) enforcement in Mauritius is made of a number of bodies. The Industrial Property Office, a department under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Cooperation, is responsible for processing registrations of patents, trademarks, and industrial designs. An Industrial Property Tribunal rules on cases such as rejected applications for registration, with the appellate body being the Supreme Court. As far as copyrights are concerned, the Mauritius Society of Authors administers the economic rights of copyright owners and exclusive licensees, grants authorization for the use of protected works, and is responsible for the collection and distribution of royalties. Moreover, the Ministry of

Arts and Culture operates a Copyright Desk responsible for information to the public and registration of Copyright.

Mauritius is a signatory of various international agreements and conventions relating to the protection of intellectual property. While Mauritian IPR laws and regulations are largely in keeping with Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS), there are still concerns about copyright piracy and trademark counterfeiting. The Mauritian Police Department would normally take action against IPR infringements only in cases where the IPR owner has an official representative in Mauritius because the Court would require a representative to testify that the products seized are counterfeit. In addition, the Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority can intercept the entry of goods suspected of being counterfeits, if the Trademark Owner has undertaken prior registration procedures with the Customs Department. Application forms for registration can be downloaded from the Mauritius Revenue Authority/Customs' website: <http://www.mra.gov.mu>.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property in Mauritius:

Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property ("IP") rights in Mauritius. First, it is important to have an overall strategy to protect your IP. Second, IP is protected differently in Mauritius than in the U.S. Third, rights must be registered and enforced in Mauritius, under local laws. Your U.S. trademark and patent registrations will not protect you in Mauritius. There is no such thing as an "international copyright" that will automatically protect an author's writings throughout the entire world. Protection against unauthorized use in a particular country depends, basically, on the national laws of that country. However, most countries do offer copyright protection to foreign works under certain conditions, and these conditions have been greatly simplified by international copyright treaties and conventions.

Registration of patents and trademarks is on a first-in-time, first-in-right basis, so you should consider applying for trademark and patent protection even before selling your products or services in the Mauritius market. It is vital that companies understand that intellectual property is primarily a private right and that the US government generally cannot enforce rights for private individuals in Mauritius. It is the responsibility of the rights' holders to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants who are experts in Mauritius law. The U.S. Commercial Service can provide a list of local lawyers upon request.

While the U.S. Government stands ready to assist, there is little we can do if the rights holders have not taken these fundamental steps necessary to securing and enforcing their IP in a timely fashion. Moreover, in many countries, rights holders who delay enforcing their rights on a mistaken belief that the USG can provide a political resolution to a legal problem may find that their rights have been eroded or abrogated due to legal doctrines such as statutes of limitations, laches, estoppel, or unreasonable delay in prosecuting a lawsuit. In no instance should U.S. Government advice be seen as a substitute for the obligation of a rights holder to promptly pursue its case.

It is always advisable to conduct due diligence on potential partners. Negotiate from the position of your partner and give your partner clear incentives to honor the contract. A good partner is an important ally in protecting IP rights. Consider carefully, however, whether to permit your partner to register your IP rights on your behalf. Doing so may create a risk that your partner will list itself as the IP owner and fail to transfer the rights should the partnership end. Keep an eye on your cost structure and reduce the margins

(and the incentive) of would-be bad actors. Projects and sales in Mauritius require constant attention. Work with legal counsel familiar with Mauritius laws to create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

It is also recommended that small and medium-size companies understand the importance of working together with trade associations and organizations to support efforts to protect IP and stop counterfeiting. There are a number of these organizations, both Mauritius or U.S.-based. These include:

- The U.S. Chamber and local American Chambers of Commerce
- National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
- International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- The Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy
- International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

IP Resources

A wealth of information on protecting IP is freely available to U.S. rights holders. Some excellent resources for companies regarding intellectual property include the following:

- For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the US and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: **1-866-999-HALT** or register at www.StopFakes.gov.
- For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: **1-800-786-9199**.
- For more information about registering for copyright protection in the US, contact the US Copyright Office at: **1-202-707-5959**.
- For more information about how to evaluate, protect, and enforce intellectual property rights and how these rights may be important for businesses, a free online training program is available at www.stopfakes.gov.
- For US small and medium-size companies, the Department of Commerce offers a "SME IP Advisory Program" available through the American Bar Association that provides one hour of free IP legal advice for companies with concerns in Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, and . For details and to register, visit: http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram_consultation.html
- For information on obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights and market-specific IP Toolkits visit: www.StopFakes.gov This site is linked to the USPTO website for registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website to record registered trademarks and copyrighted works (to assist customs in blocking imports of IP-infringing products) and allows you to register for Webinars on protecting IP.
- The U.S. Commerce Department has positioned IP attachés in key markets around the world. You can get contact information for the IP attaché who covers Mauritius at: Johannesburg.office.box@mail.doc.gov.
- Information on Mauritian rules and registration procedures for patents, trademarks, and copyrights can be obtained from:

Industrial Property Office
7th Floor Moorgate House
Sir William Newton Street
Port Louis
Tel: (230) 208 5714; Fax: (230) 210 9702
Email: trademark@intnet.mu
Website: <http://foreign.gov.mu>

Due Diligence

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The Embassy recommends due diligence before entering into any type of business deals with local companies. The Embassy's Economic/Commercial Section can provide valuable background information on Mauritian firms through its International Company Profile (ICP) service. Further information can be obtained by visiting our website at www.mauritius.usembassy.gov or by contacting your local U.S. Export Assistance Center or the U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg at www.buyusa.gov/southafrica.

Local Professional Services

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A number of the international accounting and management-consulting firms such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Deloitte, BDO, and Ernst and Young are represented in Mauritius. They provide a range of professional services including audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services.

U.S. companies seeking legal representation in Mauritius should contact the Economic/Commercial Section of the Embassy for a list of local attorneys. The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: (230) 208 9534 or visit our website

For more specific information, please contact:

Mauritius Bar Association
Max City Building (4th Floor)
21 Pope Hennessy Street
Port Louis, Mauritius
Tel: (230) 213 9130; Fax: (230) 208 8351
Email: SirHamid@chambers.SirHamid.intnet.mu
Website: www.barmauritius.com

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L'Express (daily)	www.lexpress.mu
Le Mauricien (daily)	www.lemauricien.com
Le Matinal (daily)	www.lematinal.com
Le Defi Quotidien	www.ledefimedia.info
Week- end (weekly)	www.week-end.mu
Industrial Property Office	www.foreign.gov.mu
Mauritius Revenue Authority/Customs	www.mra.gov.mu
U.S. Embassy Port Louis	www.mauritius.usembassy.gov
U.S. Commercial Service Johannesburg	www.buyusa.gov/southafrica
Mauritius Bar Association	www.barmauritius.com

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Renewable Energy

Overview

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Unit: USD thousands

	2009	2010	2011 (estimated)	2012 (estimated)
Total Market Size	3,400	4,000	4,400	N/A
Total Local Production				
Total Exports				
Total Imports	3,400	4,000	4,400	N/A
Imports from the U.S.				
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	30	30	30	

Above figures are for renewable energy equipment only. Above figures are from the Mauritius Central Statistical Office; 2011 figures are Embassy estimates.

Government of Mauritius (GOM) policy is to encourage the use of renewable energy in order to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions through the setting up of wind farms, hydropower stations, the use of landfill gas for energy production, and the optimum utilization of solar energy. The GOM hopes to increase self-sufficiency in terms of electricity supply through use of renewable sources of energy from the current 20 percent to 35 percent by 2025.

A Master Plan for Renewable Energy is currently being prepared for the development of renewable energy projects up to year 2025. The report is expected to be completed in 2011. The GOM is also working on a set of incentives to encourage small producers and households to generate electricity. A Grid Code for connecting electricity produced by the small independent power producers to the grid of the public utility has been developed.

The GOM also plans to undertake legal and institutional reforms in the energy sector and will establish an independent utility regulatory body to regulate the energy sector. An Energy Commission to harmonize energy policies at the level of stakeholders involved in the sector will also be set up. An Energy Efficiency Bill will be enacted to provide the framework for product labeling and importation of energy efficient equipment. Government will promote projects to achieve energy savings in the private and public sectors and create national awareness on energy conservation.

The Central Electricity Board (CEB), the public utility body of Mauritius, is the sole agency for transmission, distribution, and sale of electricity in Mauritius. CEB currently produces about 40% of the country's total power requirements from four thermal power stations and eight hydroelectric plants, the remaining 60% is purchased from Independent Power Producers, mainly private generators from the sugar industry, who produce electricity from bagasse (sugar cane fiber) and coal.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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- Wind turbines
- Compact fluorescent lamps
- Solar energy technology for solar water heaters
- Photovoltaic energy technology
- Waste-to-energy plant for burning solid waste
- Gas-to-energy plant for a landfill gas project
- Pumping of cold sea water for air conditioning of green data centers

- Green building design services

Opportunities

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Mauritius currently relies on imports for about 80 percent of its energy needs. In this context, the Prime Minister enunciated the Maurice Ile Durable (Sustainable Island) vision to make Mauritius less dependent on fossil fuels through increased utilization of renewable energy and a more efficient use of energy, in general. A Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Fund was created in July 2008 and has since implemented various schemes to promote energy efficiency and electricity savings, namely the sale of one million compact fluorescent lamps at a subsidized price to domestic consumers and a grant of Rs 10,000 (\$333.33) to 29,000 households for the purchase of solar water heaters.

The MID Fund is also financing the replacement of streetlights in rural and urban roads, and all conventional lightings in public buildings, schools, and hospitals by economic compact fluorescent lighting systems and the replacement of all traffic lights by LED signal lights.

The MID Fund is also supporting the implementation of two wind farms of 25-40 MW at Curepipe Point and Bigara. The private sector has also initiated the setting up of two wind farms with a minimum of 10 MW of installed capacity at Britannia and Plaines des Roches.

The GOM is supporting the Land Based Oceanic Park project, which will pump from 1000 meters deep, cold seawater for the cooling of green data centers. In March 2010, U.S. firm Total Sites Solution signed a shareholder agreement with the State Investment Corporation for the implementation of the first phase of this eco-park project, valued at USD \$150 million. The project includes the construction of the pumping station, the laying of pipes, and the construction of 10,000 sq. meters of data center at Flic en Flac, on the west coast of the island.

Two projects have been presented by foreign investors and are currently awaiting government's approval: (i) a coal power project presented by a Malaysian firm and (ii) a waste-to-energy project submitted by a U.S.-Mauritian joint venture.

The GOM's energy plan also includes the installation of a 3MW gas-to-energy plant at Mare Chicose landfill with an annual electricity generation of 20 GW.

Energy efficiency will, henceforth, be one of the main criteria in the design of public buildings and in rental of private buildings. The government plans to pass a new Building Control Act to improve building design and choice of building plant and equipment to attain high efficiency in terms of energy use. This represents an opportunity for consultancy services in the design of green buildings and the supply of related equipment.

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Ministry of Renewable Energy & Public Utilities: www.gov.mu/portal/site/mpusite

Board of Investment: www.investmauritius.com

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: (230) 208 9534 or visit our website

Medical Equipment

Overview

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Unit: USD thousands

	2009	2010	2011 (estimated)	2012 (estimated)
Total Market Size	22,000	24,000	26,000	N/A
Total Local Production				
Total Exports	15,500	17,000	19,000	N/A
Total Imports	22,000	24,000	26,000	N/A
Imports from the U.S.				
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	30	30	30	

Above figures are from the Mauritius Central Statistical Office; 2011 figures are Embassy estimates.

The government vision is to transform the healthcare sector into a full-fledged pillar of the Mauritian economy. There are currently six government hospitals and 19 private health clinics. The government is currently building a completely new hospital in replacement of the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital in Port Louis, and the new hospital is expected to be operational in 2011. In June 2010, the government announced the following new projects it plans to implement for its 2010-2015 mandate:

- i. The setting up of an Institute for Women's health
- ii. A National Geriatric Hospital
- iii. A National Pediatric Hospital
- iv. A Regional Institute of Cardiology
- v. A National E-Health Strategic Plan to help streamline and enhance health services in the country.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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Tenders for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of medical and general equipment for the GOM have been issued and include ENT, ophthalmology, dental, laboratory, sterilization, kitchen and laundry equipment and supplies. Moreover, the new geriatric, pediatric, cardiac, and women health hospitals announced by the government in June 2010 represent opportunities in the medium term for the supply of specialized equipment and supplies for these institutions.

The best prospects for sale of U.S. medical equipment to both government and private hospitals in the near future include:

- Magnetic Resonance Imaging apparatus
- X-ray apparatus
- Medical/surgical instruments
- Artificial parts/joints of the body
- Healthcare IT solutions to computerize health records

Opportunities

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Mauritius has a strong foundation in healthcare, medical travel, wellness, alternative medicine, medical devices, and medical education.

Two major Indian healthcare providers (Apollo and Fortis) invested in two large private clinics in 2009, with joint ventures with Mauritian partners. In the first quarter of 2010,

another Indian venture, Orbit Healthcare Services, invested in a private eye hospital to serve the growing number of foreign patients who are coming to Mauritius for treatment. Furthermore, the Gulf Medical Hospital from the United Arab Emirates, is expected to open a new 80-bed clinic in 2011 with a proposed investment of USD\$10 million.

Medical travel is one of the fastest growing sectors in Mauritius. The number of foreign patients coming to Mauritius for treatment increased from less than 1,000 in 2005 to nearly 10,000 in 2009. The objective of the government is to reach 100,000 patients by 2015. More and more foreign patients are choosing Mauritius for treatment in specialty areas such as ophthalmology, plastic and cosmetic surgery, cardiology and cardio-thoracic surgery.

There are currently five companies involved in the manufacturing of medical devices (e.g. catheters, balloons for catheters, breast prosthesis) in Mauritius, employing around 300 people. The trend in this sector is towards higher value added activities instead of mere assembly. Such activities include the development of sterilization services and injection molding.

Medical education is another area with high growth potential. The government's objective is to have five leading medical schools graduating 500 doctors on an annual basis. The medical knowledge process outsourcing sector, which includes activities like medical transcription, medical image processing, medical claims management, currently involves 10 companies employing 500 people. The government's target is to create 1,000 more jobs with 20 more companies operating in this sector by 2015.

The emerging sectors of the healthcare and life sciences industry in Mauritius also include hi-tech areas such as clinical research, bioinformatics, biotechnology, stem cell treatment, and nanomedicine. The Board of Investment is working with the Ministry of Health to put in place the relevant framework to develop these emerging segments.

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Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Website: www.health.gov.mu

Board of Investment - Website: www.investmauritius.com

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

Drugs/Pharmaceuticals

Overview

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Unit: USD thousands

	2009	2010	2011 (estimated)	2012 (estimated)
Total Market Size	92,000	100,000	107,000	N/A
Total Local Production				
Total Exports	20,700	21,000	21,900	N/A
Total Imports	92,000	100,000	107,000	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	800	1,000	1,000	N/A
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	30	30	30	30

Above figures are from the Mauritius Central Statistical Office; 2011 figures are Embassy estimates.

There are 260 private drugstores and 29 wholesalers of pharmaceuticals in Mauritius. Pharmaceutical products can only be imported by wholesalers licensed by the Pharmacy Board of the Ministry of Health.

Mauritius imports an average of USD\$64 million of pharmaceuticals annually, one third of which is by the Ministry of Health and the other two thirds by the private sector. The government purchases mostly generic medicine by annual tenders issued normally in July. The private hospitals and drug stores buy mainly branded products through local wholesalers.

France is the main supplier of pharmaceuticals, with 30% of the market, followed by U.K. (14%), India (12%), South Africa (11%), and Switzerland (8%). Imports from the United States are less than one percent but some European imports originate from U.S. subsidiaries

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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The main categories of pharmaceutical products imported regularly by Mauritius are:

- Medicine not containing antibiotics
- Antibiotics
- Vaccines (human and veterinarian)
- Penicillin
- Insulin
- Blood reagents

Opportunities

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There are opportunities for manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in Mauritius, and for targeting the larger mainland African market. There are currently two pharmaceutical manufacturing companies established in Mauritius, namely Mascareigne Pharmaceutical Manufacturing (MPM) and Ajanta (from India). They produce antibiotics, anti-cholesterols, anti-malarials, antipyretics, and painkillers. Ajanta exports the major part of its production to Africa. In 2010, an Indian company, Parenteral Drugs, entered into a joint venture agreement with MPM to start a new pharmaceutical manufacturing unit, with a proposed investment of \$15 million.

In 2009, Mauritius obtained a grant of approximately \$10 million under the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The Global Fund grant will help to complement

the work already initiated by the government in its fight against HIV/AIDS. The grant will also be used to purchase appropriate drugs and undertake public awareness campaigns.

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Board of Investment, 16 Jules Koenig Street, Port Louis, Mauritius

Tel : (230) 203 3800; Fax : (230) 208 2924 Email: contact@investmauritius.com;
Website: www.investmauritius.com

Pharmaceutical Association of Mauritius (Mr. Sudhir Misri, President), c/o FTM Ltd.,
Pailles, Mauritius. Tel: (230) 286 0660; Fax: (230) 286 0661. Email:
sudhir@ftmmauritius.com

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Air Conditioning/Refrigeration Equipment

Overview

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Unit: USD thousands

	2009	2010	2011 (estimated)	2012 (estimated)
Total Market Size	31,000	32,000	32,500	N/A
Total Local Production				
Total Exports	700	800	900	N/A
Total Imports	31,000	32,000	32,500	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	800	900	950	N/A
Exchange Rate: 1 USD				

Above figures are from the Mauritius Central Statistical Office; 2011 figures are Embassy estimates

Moving fresh product, including fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, poultry, and fish from the farm and ocean to the plate of consumers in as high-quality condition as possible is increasingly recognized in Mauritius as important from both the standpoint of customer satisfaction and consumer safety. As incomes rise, more and more fresh or frozen products, which require a continuous stable temperature from their point of production to the consumer's plate, are arriving in the market. As a result, imports of cold chain products, including cold storage equipment, refrigerated trucks, and containers, and refrigerated display cases, have been increasing steadily over the past few years.

The majority of these cold chain products in Mauritius are currently being imported from France, England, Italy, South Africa, Malaysia, and China.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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The best prospects in this sector include:

- Cold storage equipment
- Refrigerated trucks and containers
- Refrigerated display cases

The Embassy organized a Cold Chain workshop in March 2008 with the collaboration of two U.S. experts. Several local companies expressed interest in receiving information and in some cases quotes on U.S. equipment, particularly for new refrigeration systems, evaporators, air doors, and insulated panels. The U.S. experts also found great interest in establishing cold chain training programs in Mauritius. Local companies have a critical shortage of cold chain trained personnel and dated technology, which seriously inhibit their operations.

Opportunities

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Food security is a high priority for the government. It has recently introduced a Food Security stimulus package of USD \$65 million to boost domestic food production. Emphasis is being placed on the production of potatoes, onions, milk, and meat. Mauritius is already self sufficient in poultry. The government is also committed to developing the seafood sector as an economic pillar. For the past three years, the seafood industry has been expanding rapidly, with investments in various activities ranging from fishing to seafood processing to logistics services. These developments will generate an increasing demand for cold chain equipment and services.

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Security/Safety Equipment

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Unit: USD thousands

	2009	2010	2011 (estimated)	2012 (estimated)
Total Market Size	6,000	6,500	7,000	N/A
Total Local Production				
Total Exports				
Total Imports	6,000	6,500	7,000	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	600	650	750	N/A
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	30	30	30	N/A

Above figures are from the Mauritius Central Statistical Office; 2011 figures are Embassy estimates

Protecting property and assets is becoming increasingly relevant. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Mauritius and the government's objective is to safeguard the reputation of Mauritius as a safe tourist destination. The government is installing Closed Circuit Television Surveillance Systems in major tourist zones as well as the capital city and has plans to extend the network to other high-risk areas.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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The best prospects in this sector include:

- CCTV, integrated surveillance systems
- Alarm and intruder detection
- Access control systems
- ID management
- Biometrics
- Security services

Opportunities

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In 2010, a network of 83 cameras was installed in Flic en Flac, a popular tourist area. Moreover, the authorities are installing 217 cameras in the capital city of Port Louis and 71 in Grand Baie, another tourist resort, which will be operational in 2011. The government will extend the network to other regions, particularly high-risk areas.

The Flic en Flac project was awarded to Brinks (Mauritius) Ltd, whose headquarters are based in the United States. The Port Louis and Grand Baie project was awarded to China International Telecommunication Construction Corporation since the project is financed by an interest free loan from the Chinese government.

China will also fund the implementation of a digital radio communication system that will link up various departments of the Mauritius Police to the tune of \$7 million.

Mauritius has seen a remarkable growth in property development in the past few years with the Integrated Resort Scheme (luxury villas integrated with commercial, sports and wellness facilities), the construction of new hotels, the Ebene cyber city, several large super markets, and shopping malls. These projects are ongoing and all these buildings require security equipment and services, including CCTV and security alarm systems.

Other major property development projects representing opportunities for safety and security systems and services include the Jin Fei Economic and Trade Cooperation

Zone in the outskirts of Port Louis. A Chinese consortium is set to invest \$770 million in this project, which is expected to attract Chinese investors in a wide range of sectors, including manufacturing, information technology, property development, tourism and leisure, health, logistics, and services. Works on the project started at the end of 2009 and it is scheduled to be completed in 2016.

In addition, the Mauritian government seeks to transform a site of 400-500 acres of state-owned land located in the central part of the island near Highlands into a modern urban growth center and knowledge hub. The project would include the construction of a new parliament, government offices, commercial and residential properties, and learning institutions. The total project cost is estimated at \$3 billion.

The GOM invested \$427 million in the expansion and modernization of the airport, with financial assistance from the China. Works on the new terminal started in February 2010 and it is expected to be ready by October 2013.

In its 2010-2015 development program, the government also announced plans to introduce a nationwide multi-purpose identity card with improved security, including biometric features. The new card will facilitate identity authentication, therefore eliminating the need for multi-documentary proof for transactions.

Security in the prisons has become a priority for the authorities following a major prison break in June 2010 and several cases of drug trafficking involving prisoners. To overcome the problem of overpopulation in the prisons, the government has announced plans to build a new high security prison at Melrose to accommodate some 750 detainees serving long sentences. These projects will generate further demand for security and surveillance equipment.

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Agricultural Sectors

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Wheat

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Mauritius has always been a net food importing country. Due to its limited size, the absence of economies of scale, and the high comparative advantage of sugar cane in agro-climatic, environmental, and economic terms, Mauritius imports almost all its essential food requirements, including cereals, wheat, rice, pulses, edible oil, meat, dairy products, and spices. Inputs for the poultry and egg industries are minimal, as Mauritius has generally reached self-sufficiency. Corn and soy meal for animal feed is also imported. Mauritius imports fruits such as oranges, apples, grapes as well as a fair proportion of its potato, onion, garlic, and ginger needs. Food imports currently account for \$692 million, equivalent to 18 percent of Mauritius' total import bill.

With assistance from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Mauritian government and the private sector are developing a regional food initiative to improve food security, forming the Regional Development Partners Company to invest in agricultural/livestock production in Mozambique, Madagascar, and Tanzania. Creating trade linkages with Mauritian companies may lead to future collaboration with U.S. firms in these other countries.

In addition, Mauritius is working towards adopting agriculture biotechnology laws and regulations that will facilitate the use and trade of biotech products.

Mauritius traditionally imports approximately 140,000 metric tons of wheat annually from France and Australia. In 2007-08, due to a poor crop in its traditional markets, Mauritius imported about 50,000 metric tons of wheat from the United States for the first time. The satisfaction with the U.S. wheat and the relationship between U.S. Wheat Associates and the local milling company has opened the door for more U.S. wheat to be sold in the future. However, U.S. exporters have to compete with French and Australian wheat, particularly in terms of price and freight availability.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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Les Moulins de la Concorde, the only flourmill in Mauritius, has shown interest in the following types of U.S. wheat:

- Hard Red Spring
- Hard White

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Les Moulins de la Concorde Ltee (flourmill), Cargo Peninsula, Port Louis, Mauritius. Tel: (230) 240 8180; Fax: (230) 240 8171; Email: rauliar.lmlc@food-allied.com; Website: www.food-allied.com

Richard (Dick) Prior, Regional Vice President For the Middle East, East & North Africa, U.S. Wheat Associates, Inc., Cairo, Egypt; Tel: (202) 2380-3162; FAX: (202) 2380-3138; Email: dprior@uswheat.org

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

Crude Vegetable Oil

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Mauritius imports 100 percent of its edible oil requirements. There are two edible oil refineries operating in Mauritius that import crude vegetable oil and supply 90 percent of the market with refined edible oil. The remaining 10 percent is supplied by importers of refined edible oil in containers that are sold directly to super markets.

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Mauritius Oil Refineries Ltd., Quay Road, Port Louis, Mauritius. Tel: (230) 206 9800; Fax: (230) 240 8320; Email: moroil@intnet.mu

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Corn and Soya Bean for Animal Feed

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Mauritius also imports 100,000 metric tons of corn and 40,000 metric tons of soybean annually as inputs for its livestock feed factories. The total grain requirement valued at \$50 million is traditionally imported from Argentina. The two animal feed factories in Mauritius are willing to consider imports from the U.S. if they are able to get competitive deals in terms of freight and price as with Argentina suppliers. In addition, U.S. trade associations such as the U.S. Grain Council would need to undertake long-term market development efforts with the local animal feed manufacturers.

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Meaders Feeds Ltd., Riche Terre, Mauritius. Tel: (230) 249 3860; Fax: (230) 248 1837; Email: meaders@intnet.mu

Livestock Feed Ltd, Les Guibies, Mauritius. Tel; (230) 286 1112; Fax: (230) 286 1114; Email: livestockfeed@food-allied.com; Website: www.lfl.mu

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

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Import Tariffs

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Mauritius operates a relatively streamlined trade regime. Over the past several years, Mauritius has taken steps to liberalize trade by significantly lowering import tariffs over a wide range of products. The tariff rates currently range from 0% to 30%, while the number of tariff bands has been reduced from nine in 2001 to five (0%, 5%, 10%, 15% and 30%) in 2010. Customs duties are normally imposed on the c.i.f (cost, insurance, and freight) value of imported goods. Vehicles, petroleum, alcoholic drinks, and cigarettes are subject to excise duties. The tariff rates for different types of goods are listed in the Customs Tariff Schedule, which is available at:

<http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/mra/download/IntegratedTariff19Nov2009.pdf>

Trade Barriers

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There is no discrimination against U.S. companies as far as tariff and non-tariff barriers are concerned.

Import Requirements and Documentation

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Importers are required to submit the following documents:

- Bill of lading/airway bill
- Bill of entry
- Invoice
- Packing list
- Insurance certificate (if applicable)
- Certificate of origin (if applicable)
- Other relevant documents/permits which may be required by government agencies (such as health, agriculture, veterinary services)

Guidelines for the submission of an application for import permits as well as a list of goods subject to import permits are posted at the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives' web site:

<http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/commercesite>.

Exporters are required to submit the following documents:

- Bill of lading
- Bill of entry
- Invoice
- Packing list
- Insurance certificate (if applicable)
- Export permit (if applicable)
- Certificates of origin for exports to the European Union, countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

In addition, firms exporting to the United States under the Generalized System of Preferences and the African Growth and Opportunity Act must submit relevant documents for approval by the Foreign Trade Division of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. For the export of textile and apparel products to the United States, a Visa Certificate is required for each shipment and is issued by the Foreign Trade Division of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

U.S. Export Controls

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U.S. companies wanting to export controlled items to Mauritius must apply for licenses from the appropriate government agencies in the United States. The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) of the U.S. Department of Commerce is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), which regulate the export and re-export of certain commercial items. The EAR, including the Commerce Control list, can be accessed at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/bis/index.html>. A list of U.S. agencies involved in export controls can be found at <http://www.bis.doc.gov/about/reslinks.htm>.

Temporary Entry

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The Mauritius Customs Department may authorize the temporary entry of goods for a period of six months where the importer furnishes adequate security to cover the duty and other taxes (if applicable) which would otherwise be payable. The importer may be exempted from furnishing security if the goods are covered by documents for temporary entry issued under a recognized international convention, such as the Istanbul Convention. The ATA Carnet, an internationally recognized document for the temporary admission of goods, which is governed by the Istanbul Convention, is administered in Mauritius by the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. ATA Carnets do not cover perishable goods or goods for processing or repair. Additional information on the ATA Carnet system can be obtained from the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce at the following link: http://mcci.org/ata_carnet_faq.aspx

Labeling and Marking Requirements

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Labeling and marking requirements are governed by the Legal Metrology Act, which is available at <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/commercesite>.

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

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Prohibited goods include ivory, tortoise shell and other endangered animal products, underwater fishing guns, second-hand motor vehicles parts and accessories, appliances containing chlorofluorocarbons, asbestos fibers, and publications/films/video cassettes of obscene character. Restricted goods include drugs and psychotropic substances, and arms and ammunition. A list of prohibited and restricted imports is available at <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/commerce/file/cpcimpact.pdf>.

Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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Customs regulations for Mauritius can be downloaded from:

<http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/mra/download/CustomsReg.pdf>

Contact information for the Mauritius Customs Office: the Director, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Customs, New Customs House, Mer Rouge, Port Louis, Mauritius, phone: (230) 202-0500, fax: (230) 216-7601, e-mail: customs@mra.mu

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Standards

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Mauritius is seeking to enhance its competitiveness and as such the government is keen on promoting internationally recognized standards. The Mauritius Standards Bureau is the national standards body involved in the development of standards, while the Mauritius Accreditation Service is the sole agency for providing accreditation to certification bodies in Mauritius. Accreditation in Mauritius is a voluntary process.

Standards Organizations

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The Mauritius Standards Bureau is mandated to develop standards, provide metrology, calibration, testing, and quality assurance services to the manufacturing and service sectors. It publishes a work program of its standards development activities in January and July of each year. The website for Mauritius Standards Bureau is <http://msb.intnet.mu>

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries.

Notify U.S. is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL:

<http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

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The Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) is the sole authority in Mauritius for granting accreditation to conformity assessment bodies involved in calibration, testing, inspection, and certification. MAURITAS benchmarks its level of services with international guidelines and standards.

Product Certification

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The Mauritius Standards Bureau is currently the sole product certification body in Mauritius. MSB certification enables companies to use the MSB mark for products and processes that meet all the requirements of the relevant Mauritian standard. The license for use of the mark for products and processes is valid for two years (renewable) during which the MSB conducts regular surveillance visits. Mauritius has signed a Mutual Multilateral Recognition Agreements with the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Accreditation

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MAURITAS is the sole accreditation body in Mauritius. Accreditation in Mauritius is voluntary.

Publication of Technical Regulations

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Draft standards are published in the Government Gazette and a 60-day period is allocated for public comments. The Minister in charge of industry may, by public notice, transform a standard into a technical regulation after consideration of any written objection filed with the Mauritius Standards Bureau. Contact information for the Mauritius Standards Bureau is provided below.

Labeling and Marking

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The Legal Metrology Act provides for standards of measurement for products sold in Mauritius as well as their labeling. In addition, the Legal Metrology (Pre-packed Commodities) Regulations prescribe the labeling and measurement requirements for prepackaged products. Detailed requirements can be accessed from the Government of Mauritius Ministry of Business, Enterprise, and Cooperatives on <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/commercesite>.

Contacts

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Mauritius Standards Bureau, Moka, Mauritius, contact: Managing Director, tel: (230) 433-3648, fax: (230) 433-5150

Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection, 16th floor, Newton Tower, Sir William Newton Street, Port Louis, Mauritius, contact: The Permanent Secretary, tel: (230) 213-4884, fax: (230) 213-5265.

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

Trade Agreements

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The U.S.-Mauritius Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) , which was signed in September 2006, provides a formal mechanism to address bilateral trade issues and helps to strengthen and expand trade and investment relations between the two countries. The TIFA can be downloaded from

<http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/trade-investment-framework-agreements>.

Mauritius is also eligible for the trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides for duty free and quota free access to the U.S. market for over 6,000 products from eligible Sub-Saharan African countries. Additional information on the AGOA can be obtained from <http://www.agoa.gov>

Web Resources

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Mauritius Standards Bureau: <http://msb.intnet.mu>

Mauritius Revenue Authority: <http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/mra/index.htm>

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives:
<http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/commercesite>

Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry: <http://mcci.org>

U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Industry and Security: <http://www.bis.doc.gov>

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonix@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

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Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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Openness to Foreign Investment

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Mauritius continues to be among the most competitive stable and successful economies in Africa while actively continuing to seek foreign investment. Mauritius prides itself on being open to foreign investment and, according to the World Bank report “Investing Across Borders” published in July 2010, it is one of the world’s most open economies to foreign ownership and one of the highest recipients of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) per head of population. Average FDI per head from 2005 to 2009 was USD 217.

Of the 33 economic sectors looked at in the World Bank report, 32 are fully open to foreign investment in Mauritius. The only exception is television broadcasting, where foreign capital participation in a company must be less than 20%. However, the World Bank report draws attention to the difficulties of investing in certain sectors in Mauritius such as electricity generation and distribution, waste management and recycling, and port and airport management, due to their monopolistic market structure and domination by a state-owned enterprise.

The World Economic Forum’s 2010-2011 Global Competitiveness Report also places Mauritius first in Africa (jointly with South Africa) and 54th in the world in terms of competitiveness. Last year Mauritius ranked second in Sub-Saharan Africa, behind South Africa, and 57th worldwide. The report lauded Mauritius as “a country characterized by strong and transparent public institutions, with clear property rights, strong judicial independence, and an efficient government.”

Economic Reform: Mauritius’ economy suffered at the turn of the millennium as longstanding trade preferences in textiles and sugar -- the foundation of its growth strategy --were phased out. The current government, which originally took office in 2005 and was elected for a second term in 2010, embarked on a bold economic reform

program aimed at opening up the economy, facilitating business, improving the investment climate, and mobilizing foreign direct investment and expertise. The reforms resulted in a strong and balanced growth across all sectors of the economy and have spurred foreign investment to record levels.

Mauritius witnessed three years of robust economic growth between January 2006 and December 2008. In 2008, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was close to USD 9 billion, with a GDP growth rate of 5.3% and a per capita income of USD 7,000, one of the highest in Africa. At that point, however, the Mauritian economy, which had demonstrated remarkable resilience, started to feel the impact of the global crisis, resulting in a growth rate of 2.8 percent for 2009. At the beginning of 2010, hardly freed from the grips of the global recession, the Mauritian economy found itself afflicted by the Euro-zone crisis. The established economic reforms carried out since 2006, supported by a stimulus package and an Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Program initiated by the government in 2009-2010, enabled the country to withstand the global economic contraction. GDP growth is forecasted at 4.2 percent in 2011 compared to 4.1 percent in 2010.

FDI, which averaged USD 33 million annually for several years up to 2005, rose dramatically thereafter. Since the 2006 reforms, Mauritius has attracted more than USD 1.3 billion from foreign investors, including USD 270 million in 2009 and USD 350 million in 2010.

Business Facilitation: The GOM's policy since 2005 has been to open the economy and streamline administrative procedures for people to come, work, and live in Mauritius. The Business Facilitation Act of 2006 simplified the business licensing process with respect to starting a business and allowed businesses to start operations within three days of incorporation. In addition, residence permits and work permits for foreign investors, entrepreneurs, and professionals have been combined into what is called an occupation permit, which is now processed within three working days.

For the third consecutive year, the World Bank's 2011 Doing Business report ranks Mauritius first among African economies (20th worldwide, out of 183 economies in all) in terms of overall ease of doing business. The government's objective is for Mauritius to rank among the top ten most investment and business friendly locations in the world.

Investment in Mauritius is governed by the Investment Promotion Act of 2000. Investment regulations are consistent with the WTO's Agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS). The GOM does not discriminate between local and foreign investment, except in television broadcasting, sugar production, and certain activities in the tourism sector. Businesses can be conducted locally in several forms: under a self-employed activity, as a partnership with Mauritian nationals, or a 100 percent foreign-owned company under the Companies Act. For a limited number of regulated activities in such sectors as tourism, sugar, and broadcasting, an application for the appropriate permit or license must be made to the competent authorities prior to start of operations. For such activities, investors should seek advice from the Board of Investment (www.investmauritius.com).

The Board of Investment (BOI) acts as a one-stop focal agency for business registration. BOI acts as the facilitator for all forms of investment in Mauritius and guides investors through the necessary processes for doing business in the country. Before starting operations, businesses must register with the Registrar of Companies. Regulations governing incorporation are contained in the Companies Act of 2001. After receipt of a certificate of incorporation from the Registrar of Companies, all companies must register

their business activities with the BOI to be able to apply for occupation permit and other facilities offered to investors.

Investment Opportunities: Mauritius has realized a remarkable economic transformation from a mono-crop economy based on sugar production to a diversified economy driven by export-oriented manufacturing, tourism, and financial and business services sectors. In recent years, Information and Communication Technology (Business Process Outsourcing, call centers, software development), Hospitality and Property Development (commercial malls, luxury villas, and international flagship hotels), the Seafood and Marine Industry (fish farming, tuna fishing and canning, and seafood processing) and the Biomedical Industry (medical devices, pharmaceutical products, multi-specialty hospitals) have emerged, attracting substantial investment from both local and foreign investors.

In addition, Mauritian authorities have identified a number of projects in the following sectors for implementation in the next few years:

- i. agri-business and biotechnology (refined sugar, ethanol, food crop production -- potato, corn, soya bean--food processing, dairy products and livestock)
- ii. renewable energy and environment --wind, bagasse (sugar cane fibrous residue), solar, cold sea water for air conditioning, and waste-to-energy projects
- iii. medical tourism (medical, surgical and diagnostic packages to the one million English and French speaking tourists currently visiting Mauritius)
- iv. bio-medical research and clinical trials
- v. knowledge-based industries (foreign universities' campuses in Mauritius, distance education, e-learning, vocational and technical training)

The location of Mauritius, situated in the Indian Ocean between Africa, Asia, and Australia, offers a successful business base and proximity for both regional and international trade. U.S. companies can use Mauritius as a launching platform to tap regional markets through Mauritius' membership in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which offer preferential access to a market of 400 million consumers. Mauritius also has a free trade agreement with Pakistan and is negotiating one with Turkey. It is also in the process of finalizing a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement with India.

Measure	Year	Index/Ranking
TI Corruption Index	2010	42
Heritage Economic Freedom	2010	12
World Bank Doing Business	2011	20

Mauritius is not eligible for MCC

Conversion and Transfer Policies

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The GOM abolished foreign exchange controls in 1994. Consequently, no approval is required for the repatriation of profits, dividends, and capital gains earned by a foreign investor in Mauritius. In general, businesses do not have difficulty obtaining foreign exchange.

The exchange rate is market-determined, but a small number of institutions dominate the market with the Central Bank occasionally intervening. There is convertibility on both capital and current accounts. Settlement can be done in foreign currency, and foreign

currency accounts can be opened in Mauritius. There is no legal parallel market in Mauritius for investment remittances.

Mauritius has a well-developed and modern banking system. At the end of 2010, net international reserves were estimated at USD 3.3 billion, representing an import cover of 35 weeks. The Mauritian rupee has been strengthening in recent years and the exchange rate has been quite volatile as well. Between December 2009 and September 2010, the Mauritian rupee depreciated by 4 percent against the U.S. dollar but appreciated by 14.7 percent against the Euro between October 2009 and August 2010, before easing a little in September and October.

Expropriation and Compensation

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Legislative guarantees against nationalization exist and are respected. The Government of Mauritius (GOM) has never nationalized an industry.

Dispute Settlement

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An entity formed through a joint venture between a local company and a U.S. investor has been engaged in a lengthy dispute (since 2005) with Mauritius Telecom, its cellular subsidiary Cellplus (now called Orange), and the former Telecommunications Authority, over allegations of unfair competitive practices by Mauritius Telecom and Orange. The case remains in the courts. There has not been any expropriation of private assets in Mauritius thus far. Mauritius is a member of the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency of the World Bank.

The Mauritian legal system is largely based on English common law and French civil law. A Commercial Court was set up in early 2009 to expedite the settlement of commercial disputes. The domestic legal system is generally non-discriminatory and transparent. Members of the judiciary are independent of the legislature and the government. The highest court of appeal is the judicial committee of the Privy Council of England. Mauritius is a member of the International Court of Justice.

Performance Requirements and Incentives

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The investment code is in line with the WTO's Agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures. A foreign investor, a professional under a contract of employment, or a self-employed person may apply for work and residence permits if the following conditions are met:

- i. Investor: the proposed business activity should generate an annual turnover exceeding MRs 3 million (approx. USD 95,000)
- ii. Professional: the basic monthly salary should exceed MRs 45,000 (approx. USD 1,430); and
- iii. Self-employed: the annual income from the proposed business activity should exceed MRs 600,000 (approx. USD 19,000).

An investor may subsequently apply for permanent residence status if his/her business activity generates an annual turnover exceeding Rs 15 million (approx. USD 476,190) during the first three years. In the case of self-employed persons, the business activity should generate an annual income exceeding Rs 3 million (approx. USD 95,000). Foreign nationals can acquire property for business purposes.

Investment incentives are applied uniformly to both domestic and foreign investors. Mauritius offers a low tax jurisdiction:

- i. a flat corporate and income tax rate of 15 percent,
- ii. up to 100 percent foreign ownership,
- iii. exemption from customs duty on equipment,
- iv. free repatriation of profits, dividends, and capital,
- v. no minimum foreign capital required,
- vi. 50 percent annual allowance on declining balance for the purchase of electronic and computer equipment; and
- vii. an extensive tax treaty network with several countries.

Moreover, the government has set up the Integrated Resorts Scheme (IRS) to attract high net worth non-citizens desiring to acquire an immovable property of not less than USD 500,000 in Mauritius (within a resort approved by the BOI) for personal residence. The Real Estate Scheme (RES) introduced in 2007 allows non-citizens to acquire a residence with no minimum price set. The investor and his/her spouse and dependents are granted resident permits to live in Mauritius when a residential property is acquired for a price exceeding USD 500, 000. More detailed information on the incentives is available on BOI's website: www.investmauritius.com.

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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Under the Non-Citizens (Property Restriction) Act, a non-citizen investor may acquire property in Mauritius with the prior approval of the Prime Minister. However, the Prime Minister's approval is not required when the property is acquired:

- i. under a lease agreement not exceeding 20 years,
- ii. under the Integrated Resort Scheme or Real Estate Scheme for the purchase of a villa,
- iii. under the Invest-Hotel Scheme for the acquisition of a hotel room, or
- iv. when the investor has obtained approval from the Board of Investment to acquire property for use in his/her business.

Protection of Property Rights

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Property rights are respected. Mauritius maintains a sophisticated and impartial legal system based on both Napoleonic code and British common law. The system protects all tangible property. Intellectual property rights are protected by the Copyrights Act of 1997 and the Patents, Industrial Designs and Trade Marks Act of 2002, which are in line with international norms. Mauritius is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and party to the Paris and Bern conventions for the protection of industrial property and the Universal Copyright Convention.

The Patents, Industrial Designs, and Trade Marks Act of 2002 was introduced by the government, in part, as a response to the rise in the production and trade of counterfeit goods, such as Ralph Lauren shirts. In 2004, Polo Ralph Lauren (PRL) successfully sued local manufacturers and retailers of PRL counterfeit products in Mauritian courts, which resulted in the closure of the counterfeit operations. In December 2008, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of PRL by ordering Customs to seize PRL products imported by a local businessperson without PRL's authorization. In December 2009, Nike and Adidas lodged a legal action at the Supreme Court against a local businessperson, who imported 2,000 pair of shoes suspected of being counterfeit goods. Mauritius Customs seized the goods and when the case was heard in March 2010, the two parties came to a settlement before the judge whereby the importer agreed to have the goods destroyed and undertook never to import counterfeit goods again.

The new trademark and patent laws comply with the WTO's Trade Related Aspects of Industrial Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement and protects designs, brands, and technological inventions. In addition, the law dictates that well-known international trademarks are protected, whether they are registered in Mauritius or not. A trademark is initially registered for 10 years and may be renewed for successive periods of 10 years. A patent is granted for 20 years and cannot be renewed.

The Police, Customs, and Judicial authorities have effectively enforced trademark and copyright protection for firms like Polo Ralph Lauren and legitimate distributors of Bollywood films that have established a legal or commercial presence in Mauritius. However, U.S. and European producers and distributors of cinema have in general not established any representation in Mauritius and protection of their copyrights is practically non-existent. According to a leading IPR law firm, the Police could take action against IPR infringements only in cases where the IPR owner has an official representative in Mauritius because the Court would require a representative to testify that the products seized are counterfeit. The Customs Department also requires right holders or authorized users to register their trademarks and copyrights with its office in order to take action to protect their marks/copyrights at the borders of Mauritius. Application forms for registration can be downloaded from the Mauritius Revenue Authority/Customs' website: <http://mra.gov.mu>

WIPO has recently prepared an Intellectual Property Development Plan for Mauritius, which recommends, inter alia, the revision of some existing legislation to strengthen IPR laws and enforcement. The new legislation has not been finalized yet.

Transparency of Regulatory System

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Mauritius has built its success on a free market economy. According to the 2010 Index of Economic Freedom of the U.S. based Heritage Foundation Wall Street Journal, Mauritius leads Sub-Saharan Africa in economic freedom and is ranked 12th worldwide. The report's ranking of 183 countries is based on measures of economic openness, regulatory efficiency, rule of law, and competitiveness.

With a well-developed legal and commercial infrastructure and a long tradition of entrepreneurship and representative government, Mauritius is one of Africa's most successful democracies. Mauritius also has a long-standing tradition of government and private sector dialogue, which allows the private sector to effectively voice its views on the development strategy of the country. The Joint Economic Council, the coordinating body of the Mauritian private sector, is a key vehicle in this regard.

During the last five years, the government has brought radical reforms to trade, investment, tariff, and income tax regulations to simplify the framework for doing business. Trade licenses and many other bureaucratic hurdles were abolished.

Companies in Mauritius are regulated by the Companies Act of 2001, which incorporates international best practices and promotes accountability, openness, and fairness. In order to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, the government also enacted the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act.

Public Procurement Act 2006: A Central Procurement Board, established under the Public Procurement Act 2006, oversees all forms of procurement by public bodies. The Procurement Policy Office is responsible for formulating policies and issuing directives for the operation of a transparent and efficient public procurement system. According to the Procurement Act, a bidder or potential bidder can challenge the procurement

proceedings of a public body at any stage and request the Chief Executive Officer of the public body to consider his complaint and, where appropriate, take remedial action. Appeals may be brought against the decisions of a Chief Executive Officer to an Independent Review Panel. A simplified two-tier process, therefore, is available to unsatisfied persons to seek remedy.

Competition Act 2007: In December 2007, the National Assembly adopted a Competition Bill to promote competition, prevent monopolistic pricing, and restrict collusion in consumer markets. The Competition Act 2007 was proclaimed and became effective on November 25, 2009 and the Competition Commission is now fully operational. Monopoly, and more generally, collusion between suppliers are prevalent in the domestic economy. The Competition Commission has already launched seven investigations, out of which two have been completed and five are still on going.

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

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With its well-developed financial services sector, Mauritius aims to become a regional financial center. The sector is well regulated and proves reliable, resilient, and highly profitable. It has ample liquidity to meet the financing needs of the economy.

The Stock Exchange of Mauritius (SEM) has done quite well in terms of the volume of transactions, the number of listed companies, market capitalization, and the fairness and efficiency of its operations since its launch in 1989. In December 2010, the Stock Exchange of Mauritius had 37 companies listed on the Official Market and 57 companies on the Development and Enterprise Market, which is designed for small and medium enterprises. Market capitalization grew from USD 92 million in 1989 to USD 5.5 billion in December 2010. The SEM is a member of the World Federation of Exchanges, which reports that the SEM adheres to industry business standards.

In November 2007, the SEM was included in the new Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) Frontier Markets Indices, which are designed to track the performance of a range of equity markets that are now more accessible to global investors. Mauritius was among four countries in Africa to be included in the new indices. The SEM has also been included in the DOW Jones SAFE 100 Index, which was launched in March 2009 by the South Asian Federation of Exchanges (SAFE). The DOW Jones SAFE 100 Index measures the performance of the 50 largest stocks trading in India and the 50 largest stocks trading in four other countries, including Mauritius. The SEM's daily data is also tracked live on Bloomberg since 2008.

The Mauritius stock market was opened to foreign investors following the lifting of the foreign exchange controls in 1994. No approval is required for the trading of shares by foreign investors unless investment is for the purpose of legal and management control of a Mauritian company or for the holding of more than 15 percent in a sugar company. Incentives to foreign investors include free repatriation of revenue from the sale of shares and exemption from tax on dividends and capital gains.

The Global Board of Trade (GBOT), the first multi-asset derivatives exchange of its kind in Africa, started operating in Mauritius in October 2010. GBOT offers a basket of commodities and currency derivative products on its electronic exchange platform, including metals, energy, agricultural commodities, and currency futures.

Mauritius has an active global business sector (formerly known as offshore sector), which is a major route for foreign investments into the Asian sub-continent. Mauritius is by far the largest source of FDI and portfolio investment in India, estimated at close to USD 43 billion for the period April 2000-September 2010, which accounts for 42 percent

of the total FDI inflows into India. Major U.S. corporations use the Mauritius offshore sector to channel their investment to India. These investments are mainly attracted by a particularly favorable Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty (DTAT), which exists between Mauritius and India. As of December 2010, Mauritius had DTATs with 38 countries, including China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, U.K, France, Germany, Kuwait, and U.A.E.

Mauritius has a relatively sophisticated banking sector with 19 banks currently licensed to undertake banking business. The Banking Act of 2004 provides for banking business to be conducted under a single banking license regime. Accordingly, all banks are free to conduct business in all currencies, including the Mauritian rupee. There are also several non-bank financial institutions, which are authorized to conduct deposit-taking business as well as foreign exchange dealers.

The banking system is highly concentrated with two long-established domestic and two international banking groups dominating, holding between them around 65 percent of all banking assets. Foreign banks present in Mauritius include the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), Barclays Bank, Bank of Baroda, Habib Bank, Banque des Mascareignes, PT Bank International Indonesia, Deutsche Bank, Standard Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, and Investec Bank.

The banks focus mostly on trade financing and on provision of working capital. Accounts may be opened in all major currencies as well as the Mauritian rupee. Several commercial banks offer card-payment services, such as credit and debit cards and direct debits. Other facilities, including phone banking, home banking, internet banking, and PC banking, are also provided by some banks. Commercial banks offer spot and forward transactions in all major currencies.

Commercial banks have diversified into non-banking business through subsidiaries and affiliates. Banks are engaged in the provision of leasing, stock brokering, asset, and fund management, investment and private banking business, insurance agency, and portfolio and custodial management. As of October 2010, commercial banks' total assets amounted to approximately USD 26 billion.

The Bank of Mauritius, the Central Bank, carries out the supervision and regulation of banks as well as non-bank financial institutions authorized to accept deposits. A new Bank of Mauritius Act, which strengthened the central bank's institutional framework as well as its supervisory powers, was enacted in October 2004. It also has the power to establish prudential safety and soundness standards and regulations, and does so primarily by issue of Guidelines/Guidance Notes. The Central Bank has endorsed the Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision as set out by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. In July 2009, the Bank of Mauritius Act was amended to provide for the setting up of a Financial Stability Committee comprised of the Central Bank, the Financial Services Commission, and the Ministry of Finance to review, on a regular basis, the soundness of the financial system.

Competition from State Owned Enterprises (SOEs)

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The government policy is to act as a facilitator to business, leaving production to the private sector. The government, however, still controls key utility services directly or through parastatal companies, including electricity, water, wastewater, postal services, and television broadcasting. The government also controls the import of what it deems to be strategic products such as rice (only non-basmati or other non-luxury rice), wheat flour, petroleum products, and cement through the State Trading Corporation.

The government also has controlling shares in the State Bank of Mauritius, Air Mauritius (the national airline), and Mauritius Telecom. These state-controlled companies have a Board of Directors on which seats are allocated to senior government officials. The Chairperson is generally nominated by the government. They are required by law to publish an annual report and to submit their books to independent audit. They also are subject to the same corporate social responsibility rules as private firms.

Political Violence

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Mauritius has a long tradition of political and social stability and is internationally recognized for its well-established democracy. Inter-ethnic tensions, however, led to four days of rioting in February 1999, following the death in police custody of a popular minority singer. Governments since then have sought to calm ethnic tensions and stress national unity.

Civil unrest and political violence are uncommon. Free and fair elections are held every five years with the last general elections held on May 5, 2010, which passed without incident.

Corruption

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In 2010, for the third year running, Mauritius has been ranked the second-least corrupt country in Sub-Saharan Africa by the German-based anti-corruption network Transparency International (TI). TI's Corruption Perceptions Index examines perceptions of public-sector corruption in 178 countries. It scores countries from zero, which indicates the highest level of perceived corruption, to ten, the lowest level. Mauritius is one of only three Sub-Saharan countries to score over 5, indicating that corruption is not seen as a widespread problem.

For the ninth consecutive year, Mauritius was ranked the best-governed country in Africa in the 2010 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance published in October 2010. The index measures government performance in 53 African countries in 2009 against 84 separate indicators grouped under four headings: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development.

In 2002, the government adopted the Prevention of Corruption Act, which led to the setting up of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). ICAC has the power to detect and investigate corruption and money laundering offenses and can seize the proceeds of corruption and money laundering.

Corruption, including bribery, raises the costs and risks of doing business. Corruption has a corrosive impact on both market opportunities overseas for U.S. companies and the broader business climate. It also deters international investment, stifles economic growth and development, distorts prices, and undermines the rule of law.

It is important for U.S. companies, irrespective of their size, to assess the business climate in the relevant market in which they will be operating or investing, and to have an effective compliance program or measures to prevent and detect corruption, including foreign bribery. U.S. individuals and firms operating or investing in foreign markets should take the time to become familiar with the relevant anticorruption laws of both the foreign country and the United States in order to properly comply with them, and where appropriate, they should seek the advice of legal counsel.

The U.S. Government seeks to level the global playing field for U.S. businesses by encouraging other countries to take steps to criminalize their own companies' acts of corruption, including bribery of foreign public officials, by requiring them to uphold their

obligations under relevant international conventions. A U. S. firm that believes a competitor is seeking to use bribery of a foreign public official to secure a contract should bring this to the attention of appropriate U.S. agencies, as noted below.

U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act: In 1977, the United States enacted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which makes it unlawful for a U.S. person, and certain foreign issuers of securities, to make a corrupt payment to foreign public officials for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business for or with, or directing business to, any person. The FCPA also applies to foreign firms and persons who take any act in furtherance of such a corrupt payment while in the United States. For more detailed information on the FCPA, see the FCPA Lay-Person's Guide at:
<http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/>

Other Instruments: It is U.S. Government policy to promote good governance, including host country implementation and enforcement of anti-corruption laws and policies pursuant to their obligations under international agreements. Since enactment of the FCPA, the United States has been instrumental to the expansion of the international framework to fight corruption. Several significant components of this framework are the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (OECD Antibribery Convention), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UN Convention), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), the Council of Europe Criminal and Civil Law Conventions, and a growing list of U.S. free trade agreements. This country is party to [add instrument to which this country is party], but generally all countries prohibit the bribery and solicitation of their public officials.

OECD Antibribery Convention: The OECD Antibribery Convention entered into force in February 1999. As of December 2009, there are 38 parties to the Convention including the United States (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/13/40272933.pdf>). Major exporters China, India, and Russia are not parties, although the U.S. Government strongly endorses their eventual accession to the Convention. The Convention obligates the Parties to criminalize bribery of foreign public officials in the conduct of international business. The United States meets its international obligations under the OECD Antibribery Convention through the U.S. FCPA. [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the OECD Convention.]

UN Convention: The UN Anticorruption Convention entered into force on December 14, 2005, and there are 143 parties to it as of December 2009 (see <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/signatories.html>). The UN Convention is the first global comprehensive international anticorruption agreement. The UN Convention requires countries to establish criminal and other offences to cover a wide range of acts of corruption. The UN Convention goes beyond previous anticorruption instruments, covering a broad range of issues ranging from basic forms of corruption such as bribery and solicitation, embezzlement, trading in influence to the concealment and laundering of the proceeds of corruption. The Convention contains transnational business bribery provisions that are functionally similar to those in the OECD Antibribery Convention and contains provisions on private sector auditing and books and records requirements. Other provisions address matters such as prevention, international cooperation, and asset recovery.

OAS Convention: In 1996, the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the first international anticorruption legal instrument, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), which entered into force in March

1997. The OAS Convention, among other things, establishes a set of preventive measures against corruption, provides for the criminalization of certain acts of corruption, including transnational bribery and illicit enrichment, and contains a series of provisions to strengthen the cooperation between its States Parties in areas such as mutual legal assistance and technical cooperation. As of December 2009, the OAS Convention has 33 parties (see <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Sigs/b-58.html>)

Council of Europe Criminal Law and Civil Law Conventions: Many European countries are parties to either the Council of Europe (CoE) Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, the Civil Law Convention, or both. The Criminal Law Convention requires criminalization of a wide range of national and transnational conduct, including bribery, money laundering, and account offenses. It also incorporates provisions on liability of legal persons and witness protection. The Civil Law Convention includes provisions on compensation for damage relating to corrupt acts, whistleblower protection, and validity of contracts, inter alia. The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) was established in 1999 by the CoE to monitor compliance with these and related anti-corruption standards. Currently, GRECO comprises 46 member States (45 European countries and the United States). As of December 2009, the Criminal Law Convention has 42 parties and the Civil Law Convention has 34 (see www.coe.int/greco.) [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the Council of Europe Conventions.]

Free Trade Agreements: While it is U.S. Government policy to include anticorruption provisions in free trade agreements (FTAs) that it negotiates with its trading partners, the anticorruption provisions have evolved over time. The most recent FTAs negotiated now require trading partners to criminalize “active bribery” of public officials (offering bribes to any public official must be made a criminal offense, both domestically and trans-nationally) as well as domestic “passive bribery” (solicitation of a bribe by a domestic official). All U.S. FTAs may be found at the U.S. Trade Representative Website: <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements>.

Local Laws: U.S. firms should familiarize themselves with local anticorruption laws, and, where appropriate, seek legal counsel. While the U.S. Department of Commerce cannot provide legal advice on local laws, the Department’s U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide assistance with navigating the host country’s legal system and obtaining a list of local legal counsel.

Assistance for U.S. Businesses: The U.S. Department of Commerce offers several services to aid U.S. businesses seeking to address business-related corruption issues. For example, the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide services that may assist U.S. companies in conducting their due diligence as part of the company’s overarching compliance program when choosing business partners or agents overseas. The U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service can be reached directly through its offices in every major U.S. and foreign city, or through its Website at www.trade.gov/cs.

The Departments of Commerce and State provide worldwide support for qualified U.S. companies bidding on foreign government contracts through the Commerce Department’s Advocacy Center and State’s Office of Commercial and Business Affairs. Problems, including alleged corruption by foreign governments or competitors, encountered by U.S. companies in seeking such foreign business opportunities can be brought to the attention of appropriate U.S. government officials, including local embassy personnel and through the Department of Commerce Trade Compliance Center “Report A Trade Barrier” Website at tcc.export.gov/Report_a_Barrier/index.asp.

Guidance on the U.S. FCPA: The Department of Justice's (DOJ) FCPA Opinion Procedure enables U.S. firms and individuals to request a statement of the Justice Department's present enforcement intentions under the anti-bribery provisions of the FCPA regarding any proposed business conduct. The details of the opinion procedure are available on DOJ's Fraud Section Website at www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa. Although the Department of Commerce has no enforcement role with respect to the FCPA, it supplies general guidance to U.S. exporters who have questions about the FCPA and about international developments concerning the FCPA. For further information, see the Office of the Chief Counsel for International Counsel, U.S. Department of Commerce, Website, at http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html. More general information on the FCPA is available at the Websites listed below.

Exporters and investors should be aware that countries prohibit the bribery of their public officials, and prohibit their officials from soliciting bribes under domestic laws. Most countries are required to criminalize such bribery and other acts of corruption by virtue of being parties to various international conventions discussed above.

Anti-Corruption Resources

Some useful resources for individuals and companies regarding combating corruption in global markets include the following:

- Information about the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), including a "Lay-Person's Guide to the FCPA" is available at the U.S. Department of Justice's Website at: <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa>.
- Information about the OECD Antibribery Convention including links to national implementing legislation and country monitoring reports is available at: http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34859_1_1_1_1_1,00.html. See also new Antibribery Recommendation and Good Practice Guidance Annex for companies: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/40/44176910.pdf>
- General information about anticorruption initiatives, such as the OECD Convention and the FCPA, including translations of the statute into several languages, is available at the Department of Commerce Office of the Chief Counsel for International Commerce Website: http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html.
- Transparency International (TI) publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption in 180 countries and territories around the world. The CPI is available at: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009. TI also publishes an annual *Global Corruption Report*, which provides a systematic evaluation of the state of corruption around the world. It includes an in-depth analysis of a focal theme, a series of country reports that document major corruption related events and developments from all continents and an overview of the latest research findings on anti-corruption diagnostics and tools. See <http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr>.
- The World Bank Institute publishes Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). These indicators assess six dimensions of governance in 212 countries, including Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. See http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp. The World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Surveys may also be of interest and are available at: <http://go.worldbank.org/RQQXYJ6210>.
- The World Economic Forum publishes the *Global Enabling Trade Report*, which presents the rankings of the Enabling Trade Index, and includes an assessment of

the transparency of border administration (focused on bribe payments and corruption) and a separate segment on corruption and the regulatory environment. See

<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/GlobalEnablingTradeReport/index.htm>.

- Additional country information related to corruption can be found in the U.S. State Department's annual *Human Rights Report* available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/>.
- Global Integrity, a nonprofit organization, publishes its annual *Global Integrity Report*, which provides indicators for 92 countries with respect to governance and anti-corruption. The report highlights the strengths and weaknesses of national level anti-corruption systems. The report is available at: <http://report.globalintegrity.org/>.

Bilateral Investment Agreements

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In September 2006, Mauritius and the United States signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), aimed at strengthening and expanding trade and investment ties between the two countries. The TIFA Council, comprising of representatives from both governments, held its first meeting in Mauritius in February 2007. The Council Meetings are held annually and usually alternate between Mauritius and Washington, D.C. Currently, Mauritius has an investment incentive agreement with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and there are ongoing negotiations for a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between the United States and Mauritius.

Mauritius has signed Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements with the following 36 countries: Barbados, Belgium/Luxemburg Economic Union, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, China, Comoros, Czech Republic, Finland, India, Indonesia, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K., Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and the Republic of Congo. Agreements with the following countries are awaiting signature: Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, and Qatar.

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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Mauritius is eligible for the full range of OPIC's investment insurance programs. It is also a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

Labor

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As of September 2010, Mauritius has a total labor force of 586,600, including 367,100 males and 219,500 females. Total employment stands at 542,200, including 22,200 foreign workers, mainly from China, India, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and South Africa, and mostly employed in textile factories but also in construction, tuna canning, and hotel and catering sectors. The unemployment rate, which was 7.3 percent in 2009, is estimated at 7.5 percent in 2010, representing about 43,700 unemployed.

The GOM administratively establishes minimum wages, which vary according to the sector of employment, through the National Remuneration Board (NRB), and it mandates minimum wage increases annually based on inflation. Although trade unions often negotiate wages higher than those set by the NRB, the NRB issues Remuneration Orders for more than 90 percent of the workforce in the private sector.

In February 2009, the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act came into force with their main objectives are to revise and consolidate the existing labor and industrial relations laws, which date back to over 30 years, and to liberalize the labor market and enhance the effectiveness of collective bargaining. The new legislation also provides for the introduction of a Workfare Program under which workers who have been laid off will benefit from government financial assistance for up to twelve months and opportunities for training to increase their employability.

Wages are low by Western standards but high by most Asian and African standards. Factory workers in export-oriented enterprises generally earn between USD 200 and USD 300 per month. Middle managers earn between USD 700 and USD 1,000 per month. Fringe benefits, including transport and meal allowances, paid leave, and bonuses, represent about 25 to 30 percent of the basic wages of employees.

While Mauritius has an active trade union movement, labor-management relations are generally good. Unionized workers, which account for less than 25 percent of the workforce, act responsibly and rarely disrupt business. There has not been a major strike since 1979. Under current legislation, unions have the legal right to strike. The government seeks to preempt strikes through a system, which promotes settlement through negotiation or arbitration by the Employment Relations Tribunal and the National Remuneration Board. A National Tripartite Forum, comprised of representatives of government, employers and labor unions, has also been set up to promote dialogue on issues of national interest, particularly those related to the world of work.

Workers' rights are protected under the Employment Rights Act 2008. Mauritius participates actively in the annual ILO conference in Geneva and adheres to ILO core conventions protecting worker rights.

Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports

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The Mauritius Freeport (free-trade zone) established in 1992 is a customs-free zone for goods destined for re-export. The government's objectives are to promote the country as a regional warehousing, distribution, marketing, and logistics center for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean rim. Through its membership in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Mauritius offers preferential access to a market of over 400 million consumers, representing an import potential of USD 100 billion.

Situated on 52 hectares of land adjacent to the port facilities and a modern container terminal, the Freeport offers 120,000 square meters of excellent infrastructure, including cold rooms, dry storage, an international trade exhibition center, processing units, and office space for transshipment, consolidation, storage, and processing activities. Freeport facilities are also available at the airport. Major shipping lines (i.e. Maersk/Sealand, P&O Nedlloyd, and MSC) increasingly use Port Louis as a regional container transshipment hub.

Activities carried out in the Freeport include warehousing and storage, breaking bulk, sorting, grading, cleaning and mixing, labeling, packing and re-packing, minor processing, transshipment, cash and carry sales, export-oriented port based activities, export-oriented airport based activities, freight forwarding, express courier services, mail order, simple assembly, reshipment, and quality control and inspection services.

By the end of 2010, approximately 350 Freeport companies registered with about 250 active in operations such as re-export, transshipment, minor processing, and assembly.

In 2009, the Freeport imported USD 178 million and re-exported USD 225 million worth of goods. Main products re-exported include seafood (29 percent), apparel and accessories (21 percent), chemical and pharmaceutical products (18 percent), machinery and transport equipment (4.5 percent), and beverages and tobacco (4 percent). In 2009, the principal export markets for the Freeport were Madagascar, Reunion Island, France, Spain, Seychelles, and Italy.

The Freeport sources its imports from a wide range of countries, including Hungary, China, India, Finland, Taiwan, France, Spain, and South Africa. The main products imported include fish, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, machinery, transport and telecommunication equipment, textile fabrics and accessories, ready-made garments, electrical goods, and general consumer goods.

The Freeport facilities for warehousing, breaking bulk, and re-export should be of particular interest to American companies. These services enable businesses to ship containerized goods to Mauritius, warehouse them in secure, low-cost facilities, then break bulk and re-export them in an efficient and timely manner to African and Indian Ocean rim destinations. The private developers provide modern computerized warehouse/logistics facilities, including cold rooms and processing centers. These include Freeport Operations (Mauritius) Ltd (www.freeport-operations.mu), Mauritius Freeport Development Co. Ltd (www.mfd.mu), and Froid Des Mascareignes (www.seafoodhub.com). Goods are assembled in the Freeport for export to the African and Indian Ocean markets. Current assembly and processing activities in the Freeport include jewelry and precious stones, slabs from semi-precious minerals, PET plastic bottles, transformation of fish into fillets, aluminum frames and fittings, re-packaging of pharmaceuticals, and reconditioning of second-hand vehicles.

Two U.S. companies exist in the Mauritius Freeport. The first is Amazing Stone Ltd., established in 2005 by a U.S. citizen, is involved in the production of slabs made from semi-precious minerals used for kitchens, floors, bathrooms, walls, and furnishings. The firm, which employs 50 people, imports its raw materials from the region, mainly Madagascar. The second is Casamar (Mauritius) Ltd., a subsidiary of U.S. based Casamar Holdings, Inc., specializing in the assembly and repair of nylon-braided tuna purse seine nets, opened an office in Mauritius that provides marketing support for its fishing net repair and assembly operations in Seychelles.

The GOM, in collaboration with the private sector, is actively promoting the Freeport as a seafood hub, in particular focusing on the transshipment, processing, storage, distribution, and re-exportation of high value-added seafood products using the modern port and Freeport facilities and logistics. A one-stop shop established in the port area to help facilitate administrative clearances related to the seafood industry. Thon des Mascareignes Ltd. (TDM), a leading Mauritian company in partnership with Spanish investors, is operating a tuna loin processing plant with a daily processing capacity of 250 tons for export to Europe and the U.S. for final processing and packaging. U.S. firm Bumble Bee Foods has a tuna supply and processing agreement with TDM.

The Board of Investment, in collaboration with Airports of Mauritius Ltd., plans to develop a dedicated air cargo logistics center at the airport. As a first step, it is expected that bidders will be invited to submit expressions of interest for the preparation of a master plan for this project. The main activities targeted include re-export of high value/low volume products, light assembly operations, warehousing, labeling and repackaging, sea-air/air-sea and transshipment cargo, express courier, and freight forwarding services.

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics

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After several years of decline, FDI picked up strongly in 2006, as a result of radical economic reform measures taken by the government to open up the economy, facilitate business, and improve the investment climate. FDI peaked to USD 394 million in 2008 but fell to USD 270 million in 2009. FDI has picked up again and estimated at USD 350 million at the end of 2010. The following statistical tables, supplied by the Bank of Mauritius (Central Bank), show inflows of FDI in Mauritius by sector and country of origin (2007-2010).

Foreign Direct Investment by Sector, 2007-2010 (USD million)

	2007	2008	2009	2010*
Manufacturing	8.5	5.0	15.0	32.6
Tourism	100.0	46.5	57.0	16.6
Financial	127.0	157.0	42.0	68.0
Real Estate	120.0	156.0	132.0	78.0
Health	-	4.0	4.5	87.0
Other	4.5	26.0	20.0	53.0
Total	360.0	394.5	270.5	335.2

* Figures for 2010 are for the period January-September only

Foreign Direct Investment by Country of Origin, 2007-2010 (USD million)

	2007	2008	2009	2010*
China	-	2.7	10.7	7.3
Dubai	40.0	29.2	11.7	6.4
France	36.7	40.2	71.8	45.0
Germany	1.8	5.9	0.8	0.1
India	19.0	66.2	9.8	90.0
Belgium	14.0	9.8	3.1	4.0
Luxembourg	2.1	7.2	2.0	1.2
Reunion Island	18.0	1.7	6.0	2.1
South Africa	15.6	49.0	15.7	26.0
Switzerland	40.2	21.0	13.8	12.6
U.K.	87.6	70.0	46.0	82.8
U.S.	74.4	36.6	21.0	7.3
Others	10.6	54.0	57.6	50.0
Total	359.7	393.5	270.0	334.8

Source: Bank of Mauritius

* Figures for 2010 are for the period January-September only

In 2009, the largest inflows of the USD 270 million of FDI into Mauritius came from France, U.K., United States, Switzerland, South Africa, and United Arab Emirates. Together these six countries represented 66 percent of total investments. The bulk of the FDI was directed to the real estate, tourism, and banking sector. The main sources of FDI from January to September 2010 are India, France, U.K., and South Africa.

Investment Opportunities: Investment opportunities in Mauritius are available in the following sectors: seafood and aquaculture, information and communication technology (particularly legal and business process outsourcing), tourism, land-based oceanic industry (exploiting deep-sea cold water for air conditioning, water bottling, aquaculture, and pharmaceuticals), hospitality and real estate development (including hotels and

integrated resort/luxury villas), logistics and distribution, ethanol production, spinning, renewable energy, environment, clinical trials, education and training, healthcare, value added manufacturing and light engineering, creative arts, financial and wealth management services, and global professional services.

In Mauritius, there are no restrictions on capital outflows. The bulk of direct outward investment for the period 2007-2009 has gone to the tourism sector (hotel construction) in Maldives and Seychelles, the manufacturing sector (mainly apparel) in Madagascar, and the banking sector in Seychelles, Maldives, and South Africa. In 2010 significant outward investments were registered in the health, banking, and tourism sectors.

The Government of Mauritius supports regional integration. Following an offer from the Government of Mozambique of some 23,500 hectares of land (18,500 hectares in the Province of Maputo and 5,000 in the Province of Manica), the Government of Mauritius has set up the Regional Development Co. Ltd (RDC). Its main objective is the promotion of regional food security and the implementation of other regional development projects. Under this initiative, in August 2010, the Government of Mauritius issued a request for proposals from potential investors for any agricultural activity, including processing and support services, and renewable energy projects.

The Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd, the largest banking corporation in Mauritius, has established a strong presence in the Indian Ocean region with operations in Reunion, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mozambique, and the Maldives. They also have operations in France and a representative office in South Africa. The State Bank of Mauritius, another important local bank, has established banking operations in India and Madagascar. Outward FDI in the garments industry emerged in 1990, when the low-end operations were relocated to lower-wage countries in the region. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) also provided the impetus for several local textile companies to open factories in the region, mainly Madagascar and Mozambique. Ciel Textile Ltd, a leading Mauritian textile group, has recently opened garment-manufacturing operations in India and Bangladesh.

Other Mauritian investments on the African mainland relate to the use of expertise in the sugar industry to rehabilitate and manage sugar production in Mozambique, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, and Uganda. Long-established conglomerates like the Rogers Group, IBL Group, the Currimjee Group, the Food and Allied Industries Group, the Altima Group, and the British American Investment Ltd. have established foreign subsidiaries in commerce, poultry, and financial non-banking services, principally in Madagascar. Mauritius Telecom and Emtel, a subsidiary of the Currimjee group, have also invested in the telecommunications sector in Madagascar and Seychelles.

The following tables provide statistics on FDI outflows by country and sector of investment during the period 2007-2010.

Mauritius Direct Investment Abroad by Sector, 2007-2010*

	2007	2008	2009	2010*
Tourism	33.4	31.7	22.0	29.0
Manufacturing	7.3	7.0	3.5	10.0
Real Estate	7.6	7.3	10.0	1.4
Financial	3.5	7.2	6.4	32.0
Health	-	-	-	43.7
Other	5.2	2.2	1.5	3.1
Total	57.0	55.4	43.4	119.2

Source: Bank of Mauritius

* Figures for 2010 are for the period January-September only

Direct Investment Abroad by Mauritius, 2007-2010 (USD million)

	2007	2008	2009	2010*
France	2.0	5.2	8.8	0.3
Switzerland	-	-	-	24.6
Reunion Island	4.0	4.8	2.6	1.2
U.S.	2.9	0.4	0.8	1.8
Madagascar	8.3	8.0	2.9	1.7
Maldives	9.3	21.0	9.9	1.2
South Africa	1.1	0.7	2.1	10.3
India	1.0	0.9	0.4	32.2
Seychelles	5.4	5.7	6.5	3.1
Mozambique	4.5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Others	18.5	8.4	9.1	42.6
Total	57.0	55.4	43.4	119.3

Source: Bank of Mauritius

* Figures for 2010 are for the period January-September only

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Board of Investment: <http://www.investmauritius.com>

Mauritius Revenue Authority: <http://www.mra.gov.mu>

Freeport Operations (Mauritius) Ltd: <http://www.freeport-mauritius.mu>

Mauritius Freeport Development Co. Ltd: <http://www.mfd.mu>

Froid Des Mascareignes: <http://www.seafoodhub.com>

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

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Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

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Mauritius has a well-developed financial system. Payments for import transactions are generally made through letters of credit, depending on the exporter's payment experience with the buyer. The terms of payment as well as the currency of payment should be clearly specified in these documents. An open account can be a convenient method of payment if the buyer is well established and has a favorable payment record. For new customers, it is advisable to do a credit check through the U.S. Department of Commerce International Company Profile. Interested U.S. firms should contact their nearest Export Assistance Center for additional information.

How Does the Banking System Operate

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Mauritius has a relatively sophisticated banking sector with 19 banks currently licensed to undertake banking business. The Banking Act of 2004 provides for banking business to be conducted under a single banking license regime. Accordingly, all banks are free to conduct business in all currencies, including the Mauritian rupee. There are also several non-bank financial institutions, which are authorized to conduct deposit-taking business.

The banking system is highly concentrated with two long-established domestic and two international banking groups dominating, holding between them 70 percent of all banking assets. Foreign banks present in Mauritius include the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), Barclays Bank, Bank of Baroda, Habib Bank, Banque des Mascareignes, PT Bank International Indonesia, Deutsche Bank, Standard Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, and Investec Bank.

The banks focus mostly on trade financing and on provision of working capital. Accounts may be opened in all major currencies as well as the Mauritian rupee. Several commercial banks offer card-payment services, such as credit and debit cards and direct debits. Other facilities, including phone banking, home banking, internet banking, and PC banking, are also provided by some banks. Commercial banks offer spot and forward transactions in all major currencies.

Commercial banks have diversified into non-banking business through subsidiaries and affiliates. Banks are engaged in the provision of leasing, stock brokering, asset and fund management, investment and private banking business, insurance agency, and portfolio and custodial management.

The Bank of Mauritius, the Central Bank, carries out the supervision and regulation of banks as well as non-bank financial institutions authorized to accept deposits. A new Bank of Mauritius Act, which strengthened the central bank's institutional framework as well as its supervisory powers, was enacted in October 2004. It also has the power to

establish prudential safety and soundness standards and regulations, and does so primarily by issue of Guidelines/Guidance Notes. The Central Bank has endorsed the Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision as set out by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.

A list of banks operating in Mauritius including their profiles is available at the website of the Mauritius Bankers Association:

http://www.mba.mu/pdf/MBA_Profile_of_Banks_2010.pdf.

Foreign-Exchange Controls

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There is no foreign exchange control in Mauritius.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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There are no U.S. banks in Mauritius. However, several of the leading banks have a large network of correspondent banks based in the major cities around the world, including New York.

Project Financing

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Most major infrastructure projects are financed by institutions such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, the French Agence Francaise de Development, the Kuwait Fund, and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa. Some are funded through bilateral assistance from France, India, China, Germany, and Japan. These sources fund a broad portfolio of projects, including port and airport upgrades, sewage treatment, road, bridge and dam construction, energy, telecommunications, hospital and housing construction, and sports facilities.

Mauritius is eligible for the programs of both the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im). The U.S. Trade and Development Agency also provides grant funding for feasibility studies spanning a wide variety of sectors.

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Export-Import Bank of the United States: <http://www.exim.gov>

Country Limitation Schedule: http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html

OPIC: <http://www.opic.gov>

Trade and Development Agency: <http://www.tda.gov/>

SBA's Office of International Trade: <http://www.sba.gov/oit/>

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/cc/default.htm>

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov>

Mauritius Bankers Association: http://www.mba.mu/pdf/MBA_Profile_of_Banks_2010.pdf

African Development Bank: <http://www.afdb.org>

World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org> or contact the World Bank's local office:

World Bank, Medine Mews

Chaussee

Port Louis, Mauritius

Contact: Mr. Constantine Chikosi, Country Representative

Tel: (230) 208-0342

E-mail: cchikosi@worldbank.org

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Business Customs

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Business customs are similar to those in Europe and the United States. For men, normal business wear is suit and tie. During the cooler months -- June through September -- light woolens are recommended. Humidity can be quite high during summer -- November through April-- especially in the capital city and the coastal areas. Lunches and cocktail receptions are common business functions. Prospective visitors should bring an adequate supply of business cards as well as brochures and other literature.

Travel Advisory

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Mauritius' overall crime rate is medium and violent crimes involving tourists are relatively uncommon. Most criminal activity directed against foreigners is limited to non-violent petty crimes, such as "snatch thefts" in crowded shopping areas. Visitors are advised to keep a low profile and to not carry large sums of cash or wear expensive jewelry. If possible, leave wallets or purses secured at the hotel and carry only necessary cash and ID in a front pocket. Purses or shoulder bags should be closed and tucked under the arm and the strap held. Travelers are advised to refrain from walking alone at night outside hotel grounds.

For the latest Consular Information Sheet and travel advisory on Mauritius, please click on the following link: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_967.html#safety

For general information on international travel, please visit the main website at: <http://travel.state.gov>

Visa Requirements

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Visas are not required for U.S. citizens, but travelers must have an onward or return ticket. Immunization certificates are not required unless the traveler arrives from an infected area.

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process.

Visa applicants should go to the following links:

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

U.S. Embassy Consular Section: http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/consular_section.html

Telecommunications

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Mauritius has a well-developed telecommunications infrastructure. Reliable international mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, and internet services, including high band fiber cable connectivity, are available. Main players in the telecommunications services market include Mauritius Telecom, (a government entity that operates in partnership with France Telecom), Emtel Ltd, and Mahanagar Telephone (Mauritius) Ltd. In addition, quick overseas deliveries can be effected through the Mauritius Postal Service or services such as FedEx, UPS, DHL, and TNT.

Transportation

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Mauritius is well connected to several cities around the world through direct air flights. Regular flights serve Europe, Southern Africa, India, East Asia, Australia, and the United Arab Emirates. There are no direct flights between Mauritius and the United States. It is also relatively easy to travel within the island by bus, taxi or rented cars. In general taxis are equipped with meters, but fares may be negotiated before setting out. Traffic drives on the left. Port Louis is a 50-minute drive from the airport and easily accessible from other parts of the island except during the morning and evening rush hours.

Language

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The official language is English, but French and Creole are used in everyday life. Most business executives are bilingual in English and French. A number of Asian languages (Hindi, Urdu, and Mandarin) are also spoken.

Health

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Mauritius has no major health hazards. It is considered malaria-free. Public medical facilities are adequate and free. Apollo Bramwell Hospital, a private hospital (of Apollo Group of Hospitals, India), was opened in 2009. In addition, there are a number of private clinics that offer good medical care.

Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays

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Local Time and Business Hours: Local time is four hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and nine hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Business hours are as follows:

Government Offices: 0900-16.00 Monday thru Friday

Banks: 09.15-15.15 Monday thru Friday (some banks remain open until 5.00 p.m. on Fridays)

Businesses: 09.00-16.30 Monday thru Friday; 09.00-13.00 Saturday

There are 15 public holidays. The following are fixed: New Years, January 1 and 2; Independence Day, March 12; Labor Day, May 1; Assumption, August 15; Arrival of Indentured Labor, November 2, and Christmas, December 25. The remaining holidays are religious festivals whose dates vary. The American Embassy is closed on American and local holidays.

Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings

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No duty is levied on necessary and appropriate apparel and personal effects of a passenger arriving in Mauritius. Articles that are in excess of the concessions and allowances listed below are liable for duty.

A passenger 16 years of age or over may bring the following goods, free of customs duty: tobacco (including cigars and cigarettes) not exceeding 250 grams, spirits not exceeding 1 liter, wine, ale, or beer not exceeding 2 liters total.

In addition to allowances and concessions above, a tourist may bring with him/her the following goods free of customs duty:

- One portable musical instrument
- One portable sound and/or image recorder
- One portable radio receiver
- One portable video camera
- One camera
- One cine camera
- One sporting firearm with not more than 50 cartridges (police permit is required before importation)
- One non-powered bicycle
- One windsurfer and up to three assorted sails
- One surf board
- Fishing equipment

Information on customs formalities is available at

<http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/mra/download/cusinfo.pdf>

Web Resources

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State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

U.S. Embassy Consular Section: http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/consular_section.html

Mauritius Revenue Authority: <http://mra.gov.mu>

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

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Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research and Trade Events

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- [Market Research](#)
- [Trade Events](#)

Contacts

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U.S. Embassy, Port Louis, Mauritius: <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

U.S. Commercial Service, South Africa: <http://www.buyusa.gov/southafrica>

Government of Mauritius Portal: <http://www.gov.mu>

Government of Mauritius Ministries: http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/a-z/a_z_min.jsp

Board of Investment: <http://www.boimauritius.com>

Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry: <http://www.mcci.org>

American Chamber of Commerce Mauritius: <http://www.americanchamber-mauritius.org>

The Embassy' Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: jathoonisx@state.gov or caunhyerx@state.gov; Phone: (230) 202 4464 or (230) 202 4430; Fax: +230 2089534 or visit our website <http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service please go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp> and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, and is free.

Trade Events

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Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events.

<http://www.export.gov/tradeevents/index.asp>

<http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>

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Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The President's National Export Initiative aims to double exports over five years by marshaling Federal agencies to **prepare U.S. companies to export successfully, connect them with trade opportunities** and **support them once they do have exporting opportunities**.

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help U.S. exporters, particularly small and medium sized businesses, successfully expand exports to new markets. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers
- Gain access to the full range of U.S. government trade promotion agencies and their services, including export training and potential trade financing sources

To learn more about the Federal Government's trade promotion resources for new and experienced exporters, please click on the following link: www.export.gov

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers to U.S. exporters, please click on the following link: <http://www.buyusa.gov/southafrica/en/>

U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information can also contact the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRAD(E)**.

We value your feedback on the format and contents of this report. Please send your comments and recommendations to: Market_Research_Feedback@trade.gov

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date published. However, **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.

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